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Charles A. Saglio Jr.  
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ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AMONG URBAN  
ELEMENTARY PAROCHIAL SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARD CHILDREN  
WHO SPEAK NONSTANDARD ENGLISH

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of  
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## ABSTRACT

### ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AMONG URBAN ELEMENTARY PAROCHIAL SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARD CHILDREN WHO SPEAK NONSTANDARD ENGLISH

by

Charles A. Saglio, Jr.

Old Dominion University, 1993

Director: Dr. Nicholas G. Bountress

A comparatively large number of African American children fail in urban schools. Hundreds of research studies concerning interpersonal expectations suggest a link between teacher expectancies and pupil performance. Researchers have found that teachers expect less of students who speak nonstandard English. Attempts to modify teachers' culturo-linguistic attitudes and expectations have been unsuccessful. While teachers' beliefs, theories, and attitudes change over time as a function of teaching experience, the mechanisms for change are unclear.

This study has attempted to uncover events to which teachers attribute a change in their culturo-linguistic attitudes. Once causal conditions for change have been identified, then those conditions

might be considered in the development of new programs designed to produce change.

The study took place in the urban elementary parochial schools in the area of South Hampton Roads, Virginia. A sample of 121 parochial school teachers completed the Language Attitude Scale (LAS) in August, 1991, (pretest) and again in May, 1992 (posttest). Orlando Taylor had developed, validated and used the LAS in a national study of culturo-linguistic attitudes. Teachers who reported a significant attitude-shift were asked in in-depth interviews to identify their attributions for change.

Surprisingly, changes in attitude were primarily negative. Of 114 teachers showing changes in attitude, 83 showed negative changes.

In-depth interviews revealed that the primary attribution for negative change was consistent with Cognitive Dissonance Theory and resulted from exposure to students who spoke exclusively nonstandard English. Teachers came to associate negative student attitudes and behaviors with students' use of the dialect. As a result of this association, teachers' affective response to the use of dialect changed, setting up a conflict with previously held cognitive beliefs

affirming cultural and individual differences. Subsequently, this dissonance was resolved by a negative shift in teachers' attitudes toward the use of the dialect. Such results strongly suggest the need for intervention with teachers who will be instructing dialect-speaking students for the first time regardless of number of years of previous teaching experience.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iv
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
THEORIES TO EXPLAIN THE FAILURE . . . . .	6
DEFICIT HYPOTHESIS . . . . .	6
DIFFERENCE HYPOTHESIS . . . . .	9
TEACHER ATTITUDES . . . . .	10
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS . . . . .	12
CULTURAL DISSYNCHRONIZATION . . . . .	19
THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM . . . . .	21
THE ANN ARBOR DECISION . . . . .	22
THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS . . . . .	29
 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK . . . . .	 31
THEORIES OF ATTITUDE FORMATION AND CHANGE . . . . .	34
COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY THEORIES . . . . .	38
BALANCE THEORIES . . . . .	39
CONGRUITY THEORY . . . . .	41
AFFECTIVE-COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY THEORY . . . . .	42
DISSONANCE THEORY . . . . .	43
LEARNING THEORY APPROACHES . . . . .	48
SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY . . . . .	52
FUNCTIONAL THEORY . . . . .	56
AUTOMATIC AND CONTROLLED RESPONSES . . . . .	60
STEREOTYPES AND BELIEFS . . . . .	63
CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	68
QUESTIONS RAISED BY ATTITUDE THEORIES . . . . .	69
ATTRIBUTION THEORY . . . . .	72
QUESTIONS RAISED BY ATTRIBUTION THEORIES . . . . .	77
 3. RESEARCH METHODS . . . . .	 80
SAMPLE . . . . .	80
DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTATION . . . . .	84
QUALITATIVE STRATEGY . . . . .	92
 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS . . . . .	 95
QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS . . . . .	96
INTERVIEWS: THE PROCESS . . . . .	104
INTERVIEWS: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS . . . . .	106
EXPOSURE . . . . .	108
INTERNAL LOCUS OF ATTRIBUTIONS . . . . .	121

EXTERNAL LOCUS OF ATTRIBUTIONS . . . .	126
GOOD FIRST YEAR . . . . .	129
SOCIAL PHENOMENON . . . . .	129
LANGUAGE ATTITUDE SCALE AS TREATMENT	
VARIABLE . . . . .	130
EFFECTS OF HIGHLY EMOTIONAL ISSUES . .	131
TIME OF YEAR . . . . .	132
THE DEPENDENT GROUP . . . . .	133
SUMMARY . . . . .	134
5. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	138
SUMMARY . . . . .	138
REFLECTION . . . . .	144
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT .	148

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Analysis of Variance of the Change in Scores of 121 Teachers on the <u>Language Attitude Scale</u> . . . . .	99
2. Data from Change in Performance of 121 Teachers on the <u>Language Attitude Scale</u>	103



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The comparatively poor academic performance of African American individuals, and its relationship to socioeconomic status, is a phenomenon that was documented nationally as early as 1966 by James Coleman. In a cross-sectional investigation of education in the United States involving 645,000 schools, the study found that academic achievement was a correlate of socioeconomic status, and that large numbers of African American individuals held lower socioeconomic status.

As recently as 1991, a three day conference of The Twenty-first Century Commission on African American Males echoed some of Coleman's earlier findings ("Black Males Pictured," 1991). A bipartisan gathering of elected officials, corporate and foundation leaders and scholars met to discuss problems which assault African American males. The Commission reported that 40% of African American adult males are functionally illiterate; 25% of African American males ages 20 to 29

are in prison, on parole or on probation, many more than are in college; homicide is the leading cause of death for African American males ages 15 to 20; life expectancy for African American males is seven years less than for white male. The Twenty-first Century Commission was created in 1990 because the condition of African American youth was perceived as worsening, and in response to a 1989 National Research Council report that indicated that the economic gains made by African Americans since 1940 had stopped. In effect, the Commission was correlating African American academic failure, and other social failures, to socioeconomic status as Coleman had earlier.

The issue of academic failure was highlighted in 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence published its report, A Nation at Risk (1983). The report admonishes:

The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. (p. 5)

The nation is at risk because the fastest growing portion of the United States school population, African Americans and other minorities, are systematically failing to achieve academically. The condition of African American people in America is bleak. The Children's Defense Fund (Edelman, 1986) indicates that African American children are up to four times more likely than white children to die before adulthood, live in single parent households, be given to foster parent care, and be poor. By the end of the decade, one third of all public school children will be minority-group children; they will be African American or Hispanic, and they will be at high risk to drop out of school (Cooper, 1988).

A relationship exists among African American academic achievement, teenage parenthood and poverty. Poor African American students usually score lower on standardized measures of achievement and frequently drop out or become pregnant. Irvine (1990) cited The Children's Defense Fund (1987) which reported that students in the lowest 20% of their classes will more likely become teen parents than those with average

achievement. The report concluded that "the combination of poverty and weak skills accounts for virtually all of the racial disparities in teenage childbearing rates" (p. 4).

Educational gains of African Americans also are faltering at every level of school. The College Board (1985) and the Carnegie Quarterly (1984/1985) describe curriculum inequality to the degree that African American children even in integrated schools receive a different and inferior education (Irvine, 1990). The data indicate that: (a) African American students, particularly males, are three times more likely than white students to be in classes for the mentally retarded, and only one half as likely to be in classes for the gifted and talented; (b) African American students are more likely to be enrolled in general and vocational tracks; (c) even though the course titles are similar for African American and white students, the content varies (Oakes, 1988). Although 53% of white eleventh graders can perform reading tasks required for college education, only 20% of African American students can perform these tasks according to

the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1985). Irvine (1990) indicated that qualitative and quantitative inequalities exist in the use of microcomputers in the schools; poor school districts have fewer computers (Hood, 1984) and they are used by minorities primarily for purposes of drill (Becker, 1986).

African American youths continue to score significantly lower than other minorities and whites on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Irvine (1990) cited Rothman (1987) who reported that in 1987, African American test takers scored 351 on the verbal section of the SAT while the national average was 430. African Americans scored 377 in mathematics while the average score of all others was nearly 100 points higher, 476.

The dropout rate for African American youth is high. Irvine (1990) indicated that according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, half of the African American and Hispanic youths who were sophomores in 1980 had dropped out or graduated high-risk by 1984 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1982). A high-risk student is so

categorized because he has graduated with a C or lower average (Crawford & Viadero, 1986). High-risk students and dropouts become members of the growing underclass who are alienated from the remainder of society and who are dependent upon welfare (Glasgow, 1980). Of the 1980 group, 21% of the high-risk girls and 50% of the dropout girls had children by 1984 (Irvine, 1990).

#### Theories to Explain the Failure

Over the years, theories have been developed to account for the comparatively poor levels of academic success among African American youths.

#### Deficit Hypothesis

Some early theorists assigned the blame for academic failure of African Americans on what they perceived to be "deficits" in African American learners. Most "deficit" theories supported Coleman's claim that academic achievement is linked to socioeconomic status. These theories centered around the socioeconomic background of African American urban students. Children's inability to perform well academically was seen as a function of their "defective" socioeconomic backgrounds (Mumbauer &

Miller, 1970). African American children were referred to as belonging to a "culturally deprived" minority, and as being "disadvantaged" learners. Theorists argued that children who were "disadvantaged" by their social situation would learn better if their social climate were made more advantageous to learning. They reasoned that children who were "deprived" of "culture" would learn better if that deprivation were filled (Bossone, 1970).

Likewise, "disadvantaged" socioeconomic background was seen as the parent of a host of psychological difficulties which incapacitated African American urban youth's ability to learn, namely: an inability to set attainable goals (Atkinson & Raynor, 1974); a low level of aspiration (Gruen, Ottinger & Zigler, 1970); a low level of ego development, specifically low levels of ability to exact personal control and willingness to delay gratification (Lessing, 1969). Formal education presumes "normal" functioning in these areas.

Another aspect of "deficit" theory was raised in a famous study by Arthur Jensen, an educational psychologist at the University of California in

Berkley. In a 123 page article in the Harvard Educational Review, Jensen (1969) argued that compensatory education had not been effective for African American youths not because they had "deficient" socioeconomic backgrounds, but because they had "deficient" intelligence. He proposed that low intelligence was genetically determined and racially inherited among African American individuals. Jensen's position spawned a flurry of responses. His critics pointed out that Jensen based his findings on inadequate evidence, formulated inappropriate generalizations, and drew illogical conclusions (Crow, 1969; Kagan, 1969). Others disagreed with Jensen's presumptions and definitions of intelligence (Elkind, 1969). The eminent psychologist, statistician and thinker, Lee J. Cronbach (1969) suggested that Jensen oversimplified the many dimensions of individual differences; he stated, "I believe that Jensen is wrong and I hope he does not do too much damage" (p. 354).

Another major body of "deficit" theories centered around the "defects" of the language of many African American people. These theorists cite "Black English"



as the cause of academic failure of African American children because they view Black English as an underdeveloped, defective, perverse, and corrupt form of Standard English (John, 1963; Newton, 1960; Raph, 1967). The purpose of intervention programs was to remediate the language "deficiency" and to compensate for it. The "defective language" theory has persisted and is still held today (Aponte, 1989).

#### Difference Hypothesis

About the year 1970, sociolinguists discovered that Black English is logical, consistent, and rule-governed in syntax, morphology, phonology, and in its lexicon. Thus sociolinguists have defined Black English as "different" rather than "defective" language, and began to understand Black English as the dialect of Standard English spoken by a majority of urban and many rural African American people (Baratz, 1969; Fasold & Shuy, 1970; Labov, 1970; McDavid, 1970; Wolfram, 1970).

As sociolinguistic theory became more dominant, blame for the academic failure of African American youths shifted from the "deficits" inherent in African

American people to the responses that the schools made to language "differences."

### Teacher Attitudes

Since sociolinguists validated the language of African Americans, they blamed academic failure on the inability of schools to take into account language differences. "Teacher attitudes" became an issue as well as an alternate hypothesis to account for the low levels of academic achievement among African American students. According to this hypothesis, the features of Black English do not interfere with school achievement as much as do the negative attitudes of teachers toward the dialect (Weaver, 1983). In a publication of the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English, Jesse Perry (1985) wrote that since language is a major part of the self, the denial of a student's language is essentially a denial of the student. James Baldwin (1981) indicated that the child cannot be taught by anyone who requires him to repudiate his language. To ask the child to forego his language is to repudiate his experience and all that gives him substance. In a well publicized study

entitled, "Rodney and the Teaching of Standard English," Beth Daniell (1984) criticized a program of oral drill in Standard English proposed by Tomkins and McGee. She stated that for speakers of Black English, the result of oral drill in Standard English is psychological damage for the student. "I suspect that Rodney, even--perhaps especially--at age five, will figure out rather quickly that his language isn't good enough for his teacher. The well-documented alienation of minority children from school is testimony to the harm that such implied criticism can do" (p. 499).

Early research into teachers' attitudes revealed that many teachers did hold negative attitudes toward children who spoke Black English. The only study to employ a nationwide sample of teachers was conducted by Orlando Taylor in 1973. He found teachers' attitudes to be generally negative and called for "effective training" of teachers. Using smaller samples, Williams and Whitehead (1973) found that teachers tended to rate children who spoke Black English as less confident and less eager than children who did not speak the dialect. Calfee and Drum (1978) found that most teachers had

negative attitudes toward nonstandard dialects. Harber and Beatty (1978) reported that teachers tended to rate speakers of Black English as lower in social class, less intelligent and less apt to do well academically than children who spoke Standard English. Tovey (1979) found that when oral reading miscues were syntactically and semantically appropriate, only 16% of the teachers would not accept miscues in Standard English while 60% would not accept miscues related to dialect.

Teacher expectations. However, no single theory concerning academic failures has engendered as much controversy among laymen and educators as Rosenthal and Jacobson's Pygmalion in the Classroom (1968). Although the media publicized the work, they often oversimplified and misrepresented its content. This work made popular the notion of teacher expectations as self-fulfilling prophecies, and was followed by 15 years of criticisms, replications, refinements, and developments.

Researchers in the early expectation studies ignored many variables which are now known to be important factors in the communication of expectations.

Although grade level, subject matter, and time of the year are important, teacher and student characteristics are central (Irvine, 1990).

Teachers generally have wide control over the environment and context in which they teach. They are very flexible in the content, method of instruction, and time spent on task. Irvine (1990) cited Weick's (1982) phrase, "loosely coupled systems" to describe the flexibility and freedom which teachers have in the classrooms; she also quoted Berliner (1984) who cited an elementary teacher who was observed for 90 days and who during that time did not teach about fractions although instruction about fractions was required by state curriculum guides. Asked why she did not teach fractions, the teacher replied, "I don't like fractions." Berliner also cited an elementary school teacher who liked science and who taught it 28 times more than a teacher who said she disliked science.

Teachers socialize and condition students through their interactions. Irvine (1990) pointed out that teachers consciously and unconsciously inculcate students for their appropriate role in the institution

by delivering messages, sanctions, and rewards concerning behaviors and expectations. This inculcation is so powerful and effective because the relationship between a teacher and a student approaches that of a parent and a child. Jackson (1983) estimated that in the elementary school years, a child spends 7,000 hours in school, and from the age of six onward he becomes a sight more familiar to his teacher than to his father and possibly his mother.

Nor does teacher influence terminate at the junior high school level. High school students were asked what or who had influenced them to become the kind of people they were; 58% named one teacher or more (Csikszentmihalyi & McCormack 1986).

Teacher warmth, affect, and enthusiasm have been found to be correlates of student achievement. Irvine (1990) cited Johnson and Prom-Jackson (1986) who asked 813 minority low-income adults, aged 18 to 34, what were the characteristics of the teachers who had influenced them most. They most often selected descriptors relating to teachers' social and interpersonal skills, affective characteristics and

temperament. Influential teachers were seen as: approachable, pleasant, easy to relate to, accepting, tolerant, helpful, concerned, caring, thoughtful, and perceptive of and sensitive to students' needs.

Likewise, Irvine (1990) and St. John (1971) found that African American children improved in conduct and attendance when taught by a teacher who was kind, optimistic, understanding, adaptable, and warm, a teacher who was child-oriented rather than task-oriented. Kleinfeld (1972) found that for African American children, teachers' perceived evaluation was more strongly related to students' academic self-concept than was parents' perceived evaluation; for white children, the opposite was true.

Some teachers may be expected to teach African American and low-income children whom they prefer not to teach or do not like. Irvine (1991) cited Bruno and Doscher (1981) who found that the greater the number of African American students in a school, the greater the teachers' dissatisfaction with the school and the greater the number of requests for teacher transfers. This finding is particularly unfortunate since Holliday

(1985) concluded in a study of 24 African American students that the African American children's achievement was influenced only minimally by their own perceptions and significantly by the teacher's perceptions. Also, African American and other minority students have been found to be affected more negatively by teachers' expectations than white students (Holliday, 1985).

Dusek (1985), as cited in Irvine (1990), summarized the behaviors of teachers of low-achieving students as follows:

1. Teachers wait less time for lows to answer.
2. Teachers give lows the answer or call on someone else rather than trying to improve lows' responses by giving clues or repeating or rephrasing the question.
3. Teachers reward inappropriate behavior or incorrect answers of lows.
4. Teachers criticize lows more often for failure.
5. Teachers praise lows less frequently than highs for success.
6. Teachers fail to give feedback to the public responses of lows.
7. Teachers pay less attention to lows or interact with them less frequently.
8. Teachers call on lows less often to respond to questions.
9. Teachers seat lows farther away from themselves.
10. Teachers demand less from lows by teaching them less, by giving less extended explanations and definitions, and by



- accepting poor quality and often inaccurate responses.
11. Teachers interact with lows more privately than publicly.
  12. Teachers grade lows more harshly, giving highs the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases.
  13. Teachers are less friendly to lows, smiling less often in interactions with them.
  14. Teachers give briefer and less informative feedback to the questions of lows.
  15. Teachers provide less direct instruction to lows, giving them more opportunity to practice independently. (pp. 13-14)

In summary, teachers are significant to their students and they affect the self-concept and achievement of their students, particularly African American students, and they employ different methods for low-achieving students. Schools are "loosely coupled systems" in which teachers function with a great deal of autonomy; their effect on students could be very great.

By the time children are school-aged, they have well-developed personality traits, attitudes, and dispositions toward learning which teachers either like or dislike (Irvine, 1990). Weinstein (1985) pointed out that when teachers prefer some students, and treat them with preference, students are aware of teachers' partiality.

A review of the literature by Kedar-Voivoda (1983) indicated that teachers preferred bright, academically talented, obedient, cooperative students who did not cause trouble, students who were well-prepared, and who did not place undue demands on the teachers' time. Kottkamp, Provenzo and Cohn (1986) found that the majority of teachers preferred "nice kids from average homes who are hard working." Dusek and Joseph (1985) found that teachers preferred physically attractive, white middle-class students; they have higher expectations for students who are controlled, obedient, attentive, and well-behaved.

Irvine (1990) noted that Brophy (1985) has called into question the role that teacher expectations play in student achievement; Good (1981) indicated that teacher expectations sustain rather than create differences. However, Brattesani, Weinstein, and Marshall (1984) concluded that teacher expectations did more than sustain preexisting differences, they actually influenced student achievement. As Rist (1987) pointed out, the disagreements center around methodology, procedures, and analysis and not around

the question of a relationship between teacher expectation and student performance. In a review of the literature, Braun (1976) concluded that there exists convincing and perhaps unequivocal support of the expectancy model.

Cultural dissynchronization. A contemporary theory concerning academic failure of black youth holds that the culture-language (the object of culturo-linguistics), the values, the home environment, and the mode of learning of African American children are all in contrast to that of white society, white children, white teachers, and white schools, and that cultural dissynchronization exists between the two (Irvine, 1990). The notion of cultural synchronization is based on the findings of anthropology that the culture of African Americans is distinct and is founded in African roots. Boykin's (1986) comparison of African and European cultures (explained in Irvine, 1990) defends the notion that African Americans do indeed have a culture that is African-based, distinct, identifiable, and more ancient than European culture, and that the two cultures are incongruous.

Misunderstandings because of cultural dissynchronization between African American students and white teachers lead to the development of conflict, distrust, hostility, and eventual school failure for African American youth. Students experience culture inversion, that is, they experience specific behaviors which are characteristic of white children, for example, the use of Standard English, and they avoid those behaviors. They also experience cultural diversion, that is, the "color blindness" of many educators which manifests itself in a reluctance to discuss or even acknowledge race or issues related to race (Irvine, 1990). Schofield (1982) and Fine (1988) illustrate in their research how teachers avoid reference to race. Yet, cultural dissynchronization increases when teachers and administrators feign color-blindness and pretend not to notice the race of their students (Irvine, 1990).

Language, specifically Black English, is readily observable and is immediately recognized as culturally dissynchronized. Teachers separate and stereotype children based on their language (Lightfoot, 1978).

African American students who speak Standard English are perceived as having greater ability and to be more middle class than students who speak Black English (Harber & Beatty, 1978). To be successful, African American students must conform their language to the "standard" form.

The hidden curriculum. Inherent in the constructs of cultural synchronization and teacher expectations as well as in such judgments as cultural deprivation is a hidden curriculum. As Irvine (1990) pointed out, the hidden curriculum is composed of unstated but highly influential "knowledge, attitudes, norms, rules, rituals, values, and beliefs that are transmitted to students through structure, policies, processes, formal content, and the social relationship of school" (p. 5). How much of what takes place in the classroom fits that definition of hidden curriculum is estimated to be as high as 90% (Jackson, 1983). Irvine (1990) summarized an earlier longitudinal study by Rist (1970) concerning the effects of the hidden curriculum:

The hidden curriculum in schools often reinforces society's prejudicial view that black children, particularly low-income black children, are incapable and inferior. In Rist's study, teachers

had, by the eighth day of school, already decided that these low-income children could not learn--they were virtually written off as failures at age five! In spite of students' effort, performance, and ability, the teachers in Rist's study ignored data that disconfirmed their stereotypes and prejudices. These descriptions illustrate how schools often collaborate in the maintenance of poverty, inequality, and the unequal status of black people (pp. 8-9).

### The Ann Arbor Decision

In 1979, Charles W. Joiner, a United States District Judge in Michigan's Eastern District Court ordered the Ann Arbor School Board to change a portion of its hidden curriculum. Judge Joiner's decision, commonly referred to as "The Ann Arbor Decision," was hailed by speech-language pathologists, sociolinguists, educators, and other professionals as a "precedent-establishing" ruling because in it Black English was legally recognized, and civil rights had come to be seen as language rights (Bountress, 1980). The American Speech-Language Hearing Association responded with a Position Paper on Social Dialects (1983). ASHA's position is that, "no dialectal variety of English is a disorder or a pathological form of speech or language" (p. 23).

The decision handed down at Ann Arbor in Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et. al., Plaintiffs, V. Ann Arbor School District Board, Defendant (1979) (cited in Bountress, 1987) was the result of litigation which was begun two years earlier in July, 1977. The parents of 11 African American preschool and elementary school children who lived in a housing project on Green Run Road in Ann Arbor had initiated the litigation. They contended that their children's use of Black English set up a barrier to their ability to read as well as to their entire educational progress. In previous court cases, plaintiffs had sought to have non-English speaking children taught in their native language. In this case, the Green Run Road plaintiffs were petitioning the court to create a policy that teachers would become more sensitive to Black English when teaching standard English to African American children, that is, that the Board change the school's hidden curriculum. They proposed that an environment could be created in which the students could learn better the language of business, culture, and society (Bountress, 1987).

The issue before the court was whether the Ann Arbor School Board was in violation of Section 1703(F) of Title 20 of the United States Code (cited in Bountress, 1987) which requires educational agencies to remove all language barriers that impede children's equal participation in educational programs. A number of linguistic experts testified on behalf of the plaintiffs, including William Labov and J. L. Dillard. These described the development and characteristic features of Black English. Other experts in the field of speech and communication described the impediments to learning set up by teachers who do not take the African American children's dialect into account when teaching reading. The experts cited research from the preceding ten years which indicates that African American children's reading skills often become impaired when teachers view dialectal variations as errors, as indicative of an inferior use of language, and as indicative of intellectual inferiority. These experts also indicated that when teachers reject the dialectal language of African American children, those children feel that the teachers are rejecting them



along with their language; in turn, the children reject their teacher's efforts to teach them to read the school language. Because reading is required for full participation in academic programs, these students frequently experience school failure. On the basis of that expert testimony, Judge Joiner found that the Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School teachers required professional guidance to overcome these problems, and that the School Board had not provided the guidance. Viewing this failure to provide guidance as a reasonable cause of a language barrier which denied equal educational opportunity to African American students, Judge Joiner ruled that the Ann Arbor School Board was in violation of Section 1703(F) of Title 20 of the United States Code. The court ordered that the Ann Arbor School Board develop a plan to help teachers at the Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School to identify speakers of Black English and to use that knowledge to teach those children to read Standard English (Bountress, 1987).

The board responded with a one year educational plan to include a minimum of 20 hours in-service

education as well as a series of three-hour follow-up seminars. One of the eleven educational objectives was that teachers would become sensitive to the value judgments about dialect differences which people often make and communicate to others (Bountress, 1987).

Ten years after the momentous Ann Arbor Decision, no current information was available, except repetitive discussions of the case itself. Bountress (1987) contacted William Labov, a sociolinguist who had given expert testimony at the trial, Percy Bates, a member of the management team at the King School, and Thomas Pietras, director of language arts at the King School and a member of the management team who was intimately involved in the plan's implementation. All three indicated that, "no information had been gathered and disseminated which indicated whether teacher attitudes had been altered or pupil performance had been improved" (p. 56). Bountress concluded that even after the initial optimism generated by the Ann Arbor Decision, the potential of that decision "for positive change has been largely unfulfilled" (p. 56).

In point of fact, attitudes, the hidden curricula, are not easily alterable. Attitudes related to racial issues formed early tend to persist throughout life (Allport, 1979; Firebaugh & Davis, 1988; Harding, Proshansky, Kutner & Chein, 1969; Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Firebaugh and Davis (1988) found that the change in anti-African American prejudice in the South from 1972 to 1984 was due chiefly to cohort replacement rather than to attitude change.

On the other hand, Taylor (1973) found, in education at least, as had been suspected for some time (Breubeck, 1971), that change in some attitudes of teachers seems to be a function of time. Parceling variables in a national sample, Taylor noted that the number of years teaching experience is a significant variable in teachers' attitudes toward the use of social dialects. He stated that among the most important biographical variables "is the finding that teachers with three to five years of teaching experience had significantly more positive attitudes toward dialect than teachers just beginning their

careers or those with ten or more years of experience" (p. 197).

Two aspects of culturo-linguistic research, then, seem to be contradictory. The one indicated that social attitudes, established at an early age, remain fixed for life, and the other, presumably reflective of the population because of excellent research design and statistical procedures, indicated that time is an important variable in the evolution of sociolinguistic attitudes.

Many African American children fail in urban schools. Probable causes of their failure have been explored by researchers. Hundreds of research studies concerning interpersonal expectations suggest a link between teacher expectations and pupil performance (McCormick & Noriega, 1986; Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978). Further, attempts to modify teachers' culturo-linguistic attitudes and expectations generally have been unsuccessful. The failure of the program at Ann Arbor, and research in the field of attitude modification (Firebaugh & Davis, 1988) suggest that culturo-linguistic attitudes do not alter with ease.

Nonetheless, teachers' beliefs and theories (Breubeck, 1971) as well as culturo-linguistic attitudes (Taylor, 1973) appear to change over time as a function of teaching experience.

### The Research Questions

This study has attempted to uncover the events to which teachers attribute a change in their culturo-linguistic attitudes. If research can determine the causal condition for change in culturo-linguistic attitudes, then those causes might be considered in a program designed for attitude change. In other words, this study has attempted to uncover information which can be used to develop programs more effective than the one at Ann Arbor.

The uncharted research territory is the "why" behind the change in teachers' culturo-linguistic attitudes over time. The research questions were: (a) Do culturo-linguistic attitudes of urban elementary parochial school teachers change over time? (b) What are the attributions or internal processes that account for changes in attitude toward the use of dialectal

English? The present study has examined these questions in the urban parochial elementary schools of the South Hampton Roads area of Virginia.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Most often attitudes are defined in terms of beliefs which serve to evaluate; they are measured along opposing dimensions such as negative-positive or pro-contra (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The most prevalent and widely accepted view of attitudes is the "three-component" thesis proposed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960). According to this thesis, an attitude contains three "components:" (a) "affect" which is concerned with feelings, evaluations, and emotions (e.g., like-dislike); (b) "cognition" which is concerned with beliefs or veracity or truthfulness (e.g., true-false); and (c) "behavior" which is concerned with acts or with predispositions or intentions to act in a given manner.

Using this model, researchers have asked subjects about their likes and dislikes concerning an object or "target" (their affect), about their beliefs (their cognition) and then compared these with each other and with actual behaviors. In this manner Kothandapani

(1971) examined attitudes toward contraception and Ostrom (1969) toward the Church. Both used self-report techniques, and concluded that the three components of attitudes are interrelated yet distinguishable.

A need was seen to explore the factors which cause the relationship among the three components to become higher or lower. Fazio and Zanna (1981) found that affect and behavior are likely to be consistently high for attitudes acquired in direct personal experience. On the other hand, Breckler (1984), concerned with internal validity, argued that some studies may have shown inflated and spurious estimates of the relationships among affect, cognition and behavior because they rely on self-report techniques, and usually without the attitude-object or target being present. Breckler's concern is that such a technique asks subjects for a response not to the target, but to the symbolic representation of the target held in memory. Breckler pointed out that therefore all self-report responses, whether intended to be affective, cognitive or behavioral, are likely mediated by the cognitive.



Breckler (1984) conducted two studies to obtain measures of the three components of attitudes toward snakes. In the first study, a live snake was used. In addition to verbal measures, affect was also measured by heart-rate and approach-avoidance toward the snake. Affect, cognition, and behavior were found to be distinct components, moderately correlated with each other; the correlations were 0.38 between affect and cognition, 0.50 between affect and behavior, and 0.70 between cognition and behavior. In the second study, only verbal measures were used and subjects merely imagined the presence of a live snake. While the three components were found to be statistically distinguishable, the correlations were far higher and far more uniform, ranging from 0.81 to 0.86. The conclusion, in practical terms, is that a person who believes that a snake is perfectly harmless might believe that he would be willing to pick it up, but when confronted with a harmless snake, he might be unwilling to do so (Eiser & Van der Pligt, 1988). The implication for the present study was that teachers needed to be presented with examples of social dialects

at the time they were asked to report their attitudes about them.

### Theories of Attitude Formation and Change

Attitude research flourished in the 1920s and 1930s, and LaPiere's "classic" 1934 study of anti-Chinese sentiment still evokes comments (Dockey & Bedlian, 1989). But attitude research did not maintain its momentum because few generalizable principles resulted and because very little emerged to distinguish "attitude" from other social concepts such as conformity, stereotype, personality, sentiments, or values (Katz, 1989).

A push to unify attitude research received recognition in the 1950s with the functional approach, which combined beliefs and motives to explain the diversity of motivational patterns. Functionalism proposes that attitudes are a means by which the individual meets some of his needs. The theory holds that the reasons for attitude formation, maintenance, and change must be analyzed. Functionalism assumes that attempts to change attitudes have to be directed directly toward the cause of the attitudes. But

functionalism declined and did not come to the fore again until the later portion of the last decade.

When it was first proposed, functionalism failed to flourish for several reasons (Katz, 1989). First, there was no ready simple thorough method of investigation generated by the theory. Second, a new publishable theory required a great deal of resources and personnel to conduct research to support the theory. Third, it was contradictory of other models which proposed a single concept explanation. Psychology was essentially monistic. Psychologists had difficulty with two-part learning theories or with four-part theories of attitude formation. Finally, consistency theory, which emphasized cognitive processes, was prominent. Behaviorism and Freudian understandings in social psychology were giving way to the concepts of balance, congruity, and dissonance. These were tested by well-designed experiments.

Consistency theory made a tremendous impact on the field of attitude studies, and it made lasting contributions. Essentially, it corrected the earlier neglect of the individual as one who actively

perceives, interprets, and thinks. It gave rise to the notion that people structure and restructure their understanding of a changing world in ways that make sense to them (Katz, 1989).

However, questions were raised about the predictability and permanence of the changes brought about through the experiments conducted by the cognitive theorists. The experimental settings were often contrived and game-like. In non-experimental settings, would subjects be constrained by the psychological need for logical consistency? Rather, would they turn to psycho-logic which permits the individual to be selective, to rationalize, to distort, and to deny? Since an individual has a multitude of experiences, beliefs, and conflicting demands, could the power of the wish or the will be ignored? If behavior is at times inconsistent, perhaps a look at the psycho-logic is not sufficient; perhaps a look at motivational patterns also is necessary. To examine motivational patterns would be the way to explore the influence of the social setting on the development of private and public attitudes. By what rationale would studies

which deal with needs, drives, and desires be excluded? Theories had already been postulated to explain social motivation, reinforcement and reward, and the nature of determinants of personality; why should they be put aside? Consistency of cognitive process theory represents only one chapter in attitude research. A functional approach provided a broader framework. Functionalism has reappeared in attitude research and theory within the last ten years (Katz, 1989).

The 1950s and 1960s produced a great number of theories of attitude formation, and the 1970s and 1980's replicated and expanded the earlier studies and applied the early theories to new studies (Katz, 1989).

The absence of an integrative theoretical system does not indicate an historic lack in the quantity of theories to explain attitude formation and change. A great number of theories have been advanced. Following is a summary of the dominant theoretical positions. The theories were organized into major groups in what came to be known in the field of attitude research as "the Yale Studies" (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953). Theories are organized according to the nature of the

psychological processes postulated to bring about change.

### Cognitive Consistency Theories

A considerable amount of attitude research has tested hypotheses related to theories of cognitive consistency which became popular in the late 1950s and 1960s. These theories are concerned with inconsistencies which arise between affect and cognition about an attitude object. Although the consistency theories differ in the forms of inconsistency about which they are concerned, they hold in common that inconsistency is unpleasant and that the unpleasant state leads to psychological tension. The tension, in turn, leads to attempts to reduce the inconsistency. These theories are "drive-reduction models" of behavior in which the motivating force for change is inconsistency, a noxious state. Attitude change is an important way to reduce inconsistency (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Major consistency theories are balance theory, congruity theory, affective-cognitive consistency theory and dissonance theory.

Balance theories. Heider (1946, 1958) was the father of the theories of consistency. He posited that people tend to perceive others and objects linked to them so that the system of perception has balance. Thus, as Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) illustrate, if a person likes a source who favors a certain position on an issue, the balancing process induces that person to favor that position too. When states of imbalance occur, the resultant psychological tension motivates the person to restore balance by changing the relations. The model predicts a similar attitude toward issues that like sources favor or disfavor. The work on prestige suggestion (Asch, 1952) supports these hypotheses. Insko and Cialdini (1969) and Cialdini and Insko (1969) support the idea that liking leads to agreement.

Balance theory also predicts that people are attracted to and feel positively toward people whom they perceive to feel as they do about attitude-objects. Further, people will feel negatively toward people whom they perceive to disagree with them. Newcomb's (1961) classic study involving degree of

acquaintanceship in fraternity housemates found that personal attraction was correlated to the degree of agreement in attitudes and values.

Osgood (1960) and Zajonc (1960) have criticized Heider's balance model as deficient. The model does not consider the degree of liking or the relative importance to the perceiver of the components and relations. Thus in Heider's model, there are no degrees of balance or imbalance and one cannot, therefore, predict the degree of change. Also, Heider limited his consideration to systems of only three elements: the perceiver, the other person, and the impersonal entity. A more developed system could be partially balanced and imbalanced. Furthermore, the system offers no prediction about which relationship will change in order to restore balance (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

Others have extended Heider's theory to accommodate the criticisms of it. Wiest (1965) and Feather (1966) proposed quantitative theories of balance to consider the strength of the relationships among the elements.



While a great many studies support the balance principle, Newcomb (1968) has reviewed the literature to find that many of the research designs involve hypothetical and role-playing situations in which the subjects were asked to respond to hypothetical situations, thus limiting the validity of the findings.

Congruity theory. Congruity theory, proposed by Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) is similar to Heider's balance theory. The focus is on changes in the evaluation of a perceiver and an attitude-object linked by a positive or negative assertion. Congruity exists when a perceiver and an object which are positively associated have exactly the same evaluation and when those that are negatively associated have exactly the opposite evaluations (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). In tests of the congruity model, subjects and concepts are evaluated on a scale which ranges from +3 to -3. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) explain that if the source and the concept are related by a positive statement, then congruity exists when evaluation of both is the same (e.g. +3 source and +3 concept). If the source and the concept are related by a negative assertion,

then congruity exists if evaluation of the two is exactly the same but opposite in sign (e.g. +3 source and -3 concept). Any other deviation either in sign value or numeric value represents incongruity. Thus a +3 source favoring a +1 concept is incongruous, although the relationship maintains "balance" as in Heider's theory. Incongruity leads to change. Unlike Heider's model, congruity theory predicts the degree of change. Congruous relationships are stable, and no change in attitude is predicted.

Affective-cognitive consistency theory. Whereas congruity theory stresses the consistency in evaluation of objects that are linked by assertions, affective-cognitive consistency theory is concerned with a person's overall attitude toward an object (the "affective" portion) and his beliefs about how it relates to his general values (the "cognitive" portion).

Affective-cognitive consistency theory as proposed by Rosenberg (1956, 1960) postulates that a person's affect toward the attitude-object tends to be consistent with the cognitive component of his

attitude. When there is inconsistency between the two beyond a tolerable level, the individual makes the components more consistent and reduces the inconsistency by changing the components.

Dissonance theory. Much work has been concerned with the prediction of behavior from attitudes across a variety of areas such as smoking (Fishbein, 1982), use of alcohol (Budd & Spencer, 1984, 1985), contraception (Davidson & Jaccard, 1975, 1979; Pagel & Davidson, 1984), choice of breast or bottle feeding (Manstead, Proffitt & Smart, 1983), or consumer behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1984). In addition, attitudes have been seen as causal, i.e., of people behaving in a given way because of their attitudes (Eiser & van der Pligt, 1988). However, there is considerable research to suggest that the opposite is true: that people may change their attitudes to bring them more into line with behavioral decisions they have already made.

According to Festinger in A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (1957), any decision between alternative courses of action may produce an experience of tension or "dissonance." The strength of the experience of

tension is directly proportionate to the difficulty involved in the decision. The prime example of dissonance occurs where the cognition that one's behavior is inconsistent with the cognition that such behavior is "bad" or has "bad" consequences. Like Heider (1946) in his theory of balance, Festinger assumes that inconsistency is experienced as unpleasant and that subjects are motivated to alter the thoughts that give rise to it. The distinctive feature of cognitive dissonance theory is the notion that present attitudes can be made more consistent with previous decisions.

The experimental design used to test the prediction that attitudes will change to meet previous decisions is "forced compliance." In a forced compliance study (Eiser & van der Pligt, 1988), the experimenter gets subjects to agree to perform a behavior which is in some way inconsistent with pre-existing attitudes. Afterwards, their relevant attitudes are reassessed, often by another experimenter. Subjects often report attitudes that are more in line with their previous behaviors.

Eiser and van der Pligt (1988) pointed out that a number of studies have been conducted which have shifted the emphasis in recent dissonance research away from the notion of strictly cognitive inconsistency toward an understanding of the more motivational or emotional effects of feeling responsible for a bad decision. The studies demonstrated that the more we feel personally responsible for or can foresee the negative consequences of our behavior, the more we change our attitude toward it (Cooper & Goethals 1974). In their review of the literature on "counterattitudinal advocacy," Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) indicate that the studies which have stimulated the most important developments in the theory of dissonance have found that a person experiences dissonance when he engages in behavior contrary to his attitudes. Role-playing a position contrary to one's attitudes likewise produces dissonance.

The amount of justification a person has to engage in behavior which is discrepant with his attitudes contributes to the degree of dissonance he feels. Justification is a constant element in otherwise

dissonant situations. For example, if someone who does not believe that the use of dialectal English can be justified is asked to give a speech in favor of the acceptance of social dialects for a large sum of money, he would have the constant justification corresponding to the money; he would experience less dissonance than if he were to receive little or no money. Thus the theory holds that the greater the amount of justification, the smaller the amount of the dissonance. If all avenues to dissonance reduction except attitude change are eliminated, then a person adjusts his attitudes to become consonant with his behaviors.

Further, the amount of attitude change depends on the amount of dissonance aroused. Likewise, the amount of attitude change is inversely related to the amount of justification for counterattitudinal behaviors. Maximum attitude change occurs when a person barely has the amount of justification necessary to induce him to perform counterattitudinal actions.

The counterattitudinal situation contains at least two cognitive elements: one describes the behavior,

i.e., "I made a speech supporting the acceptance of social dialects;" the other corresponds to the pre-existing attitude, "I am opposed to the recognition of social dialects." The latter one, the attitudinal one, changes as the individual is not likely able to suppress the former one, the action, from memory. The behavior itself was responsible for the commitment of the person who changes the portion of cognition related to his initial attitude in order to reduce dissonance (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) designed the classic study to test this proposition. Their one dollar bill and twenty dollar bill study supported the theory that the less the reward promised to engage in behavior contrary to one's beliefs, the greater the degree of change in attitude toward the behavior. The finding is nonintuitive, and has been interpreted as contrary to reinforcement theory. Thus the study has become the subject of much controversy in attitude research. Many studies followed which offer alternative explanations for the finding.

### Learning Theory Approaches

The consistency theories discussed above begin with a cognitive structure and are concerned with changes in the structure which take place because of inconsistencies. Learning theory examines the process by which these cognitive structures came to be learned.

There are many learning-theories, and hence there are many different approaches to theories of how attitudes are learned and changed. Generally, learning theories differ from one another in how they understand the process of learning and in what conditions they describe as necessary for learning to take place (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

Educational psychologists have debated whether the act of learning requires reinforcement or mere contiguity in the bond between a stimulus and response; whether stimulus-response bonds or expectancies are established in the act of learning, and other issues (Eiser & Van der Plight, 1988). These issues are not resolved with ease, and, to confound the matter even more, researchers treat the processes involved in general terms such as "conditioning," "reinforcement,"



and "incentive" (Eiser & Van der Plight, 1988; Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). These terms undermine the attempt to apply learning-theory to attitude-learning-theory; however, they provide the illusion of an explanation because the terms themselves imply concepts which are the subject of considerable controversy.

Some theorists criticize the application of learning-theory to attitude-learning-theory (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974; Van Dijk, 1987). They point out that many studies of attitude-formation are conducted to demonstrate the application of simple principles of learning to complex human behaviors. This gives rise to the question as to whether the same processes are involved when a paradigm is applied in the two realms. For example, Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) ask whether the processes are the same for classical conditioning of eyelid responses as for the classical conditioning of attitudes. A second question is whether the principles derived in simple attitude-learning experiments are general enough to account for the complex learning which may take place in the reformulation of attitudes.

Criticisms such as these have contributed to the rebirth of functionalism in attitude-studies since functionalism has incorporated more than any single paradigm into its model (Pratkanis, Breckler & Greenwald, 1989); functional theories are discussed below immediately after social judgment theories.

Staats (1967, 1968) proposed a theory of classical conditioning of attitude formation involving stimulus and response. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) apply a classical conditioning paradigm to the establishment of a negative attitude toward a minority group. They use the example of a child who hears negative adjectives (e.g., dirty, stupid, unreliable) attached to the name of a particular minority group. The minority group name is the to-be-conditioned stimulus and the negative adjectives serve as the unconditional stimuli which evoke the unconditioned responses which are implicit negative evaluation responses. As the to-be-conditioned response is paired with various unconditioned stimuli, the minority group name comes to elicit an evaluative conditioned response or attitude.

The research on the classical conditioning of attitudes has been severely criticized. According to Orne (1962), subjects in an experiment are eager to learn the purpose of the experiment and to validate the experimenter's findings. Although this is true of many experimental models, it is said to be especially true of research on attitude conditioning because the experimental design allows many opportunities to discover the experimental hypothesis.

Rhine (1958) extended the theory of Staats to show how a concept, for example, Native American, can be learned with or without an attitude toward Native Americans. Only when there are stimuli that evoke an evaluative response which is attached to the concept is an attitude acquired. Attitude strength is a function of the consistency with which evaluation stimuli are associated with the concept.

Fishbein (1963), revising the theory of Rhine, argued that concepts such as black hair, dark skin and proud, which become associated with the attitude concept, Native American, constitute the person's beliefs about the object. Unlike Rhine, Fishbein

argued that one cannot distinguish between beliefs about the attitude object which have an affective component and beliefs without evaluative meaning. He argued that all stimuli elicit evaluative responses although some responses may be neutral in evaluation.

Other theorists have proposed similar learning theories with slight differences in their approach. Among these are Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953) who were concerned with the role of incentives in attitude changes; Weiss (1962, 1968) whose work made an application of learning theory to learning persuasion; and Bem (1967) whose theory, based on the verbal learning ideas of Skinner (1953, 1957), is concerned with the notion of how individuals learn to describe their internal states, motives, and attitudes.

#### Social Judgment Theory

The early Yale studies (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953) demonstrated that some variables which influenced attitude change also influenced judgments concerning those variables. Social judgment theory accounts for attitude change through judgmental processes. In their work on source credibility, Hovland and Weiss (1951),

and Kelman and Hovland (1953), as explained by Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974), found that credible sources not only produced more opinion change but also were viewed as fairer and less biased than sources of low credibility. These findings suggested that the initial attitude of the recipient might influence the judgment of persuasive messages and that these judgmental factors might then affect the degree of change in attitude.

Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) further explained the theory of Sherif and Hovland (1961): A person's stand on an issue serves as an anchor for the judgment of attitude-related stimuli. An initial opinion provides a point of reference against which to evaluate other opinions. These other views on an issue can be ordered on the attitudinal continuum comprised of categories or latitudes of acceptance, rejection, or noncommitment.

Both the width of an individual's latitudes and the location of his preferred position on any issue influence his judgment and evaluation of a communication. If a communication falls within his latitude of acceptance, he assimilates it, that is, he

views it as close to his own position, and evaluates it as fair and unbiased. If a communication falls within his latitude of rejection, he contrasts it, that is, he views it as outside his own position, and evaluates it as unfair and biased.

With respect to change in attitude, social judgment theory holds that communications assessed to be within the latitude of acceptance produce change in the direction of the message. The degree of an individual's change in attitude is greater within the latitude of acceptance when the discrepancy between the initial position of the recipient and the position advocated by the message is greater. Concerning communications that fall within the latitude of rejection, the greater the discrepancy, the smaller the degree of change. The evidence suggests that the degree of change is greatest for communications within the latitude of acceptance (Atkins, Deaux & Bieri, 1967) and for those located at the beginning of the latitude of rejection (Peterson & Koulack, 1969).

Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) explain that social judgment theory predicts an inverted U-shaped

relationship between attitude change and discrepancy size when the entire range of discrepancy sizes is considered. But the point at which attitude change begins to decrease as discrepancy size continues to increase depends on the width of the latitudes of acceptance and rejection. In turn, the width of an individual's latitudes depends on such variables as his own ego-involvement and the degree of credibility he assigns to the communicator.

Ambiguities are present in the formulation of the theory. The concept of ego-involvement is unclear, and problems exist in any attempt to validate empirically the theory's notion about the effects of communicator credibility.

The underlying reason for attitude change is very similar to that postulated by the various theories of cognitive consistency, that is, the need to maintain a stable self-identity and world-view. A discrepant communication puts the recipient in conflict. Resolution of the conflict involves judgment of the message and change of one's own position. The individual benefits of the two modes of resolution,

judgments and changes, has not been specified, and the theory has remained vague as to the exact relationship between the two (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

### Functional Theory

Functional theories consider how attitudes and efforts to change attitudes are related to the motivational structure of the individual. Each theory holds as its premise the idea that individuals maintain attitudes and change them for differing reasons (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). The core issue is whether attitudes serve different functions and require different conditions and procedures if they are to be changed. For example, to increase information about ethnic groups may not affect prejudices whose basis is ego-defensive (Katz, 1989). The assessment of motivational patterns and the conditions to change them or make them salient is at the heart of functional theories. The problem for functional theorists is to integrate bits of validated information into a systematic and adequate set of principles.

Katz (1960) and Katz and Stotland (1959) identified four functions served by attitudes: (a) the



instrumental or utilitarian function, (b) the knowledge function, (c) the ego-defensive function, and (d) the value-expressive function. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) explain the four functions as follows.

The instrumental or utilitarian function has as its premise the notion that people are motivated to gain reward and to minimize punishment. Attitudes which serve this function are helpful to obtain positive reinforcements or to prevent negative reinforcements. This function takes into consideration some principle concerns of the learning theory approaches toward attitude formation and change: It considers learning through reinforcements or incentives, and learning by proximity (contiguity) with affective states.

Utilitarian attitudes are aroused by a need. Thus, the need for social approval might invoke in a person a given attitude which will gain for him the approval of his group. The political candidate who defends motherhood is attempting to arouse the positive reaction that many people associate with that concept. Change in utilitarian attitudes is accomplished by

altering the reinforcers so that the attitude no longer obtains rewards, or so that it leads to punishment. Other conditions for the change of utilitarian attitudes involve either change in needs, or learning new and better paths to motive satisfaction.

The knowledge function of attitudes presupposes that an individual has the need to maintain a stable, organized and meaningful world-structure. Attitudes may be acquired or changed to maintain cognitive consistency; attitudes and beliefs may be acquired on the basis that they contain valuable information; attitudes and opinions may be acquired to provide a standard against which the world is evaluated. Attitudes are changed when existing attitudes prove inadequate to deal with new situations, or because more meaningful information has been obtained.

The ego-defensive function of attitudes is said to protect the person from threats externally, and from becoming aware of his own unacceptable impulses. A particular attitude may serve an individual's ego-defensive needs, for example, through the mechanism of projection or displacement.

Ego-defensive attitudes may be aroused by internal threats or external threats, or by frustration, repressed impulses, or by authoritarian-source suggestions. Ego-defensive attitudes often involve displacement of anger onto a remote target from an original frustrating event; therefore, the presence of the remote target (the attitude-object) is not required to arouse the attitude. The mechanism of displacement makes ego-defensive attitudes difficult to change (Sarnoff 1960).

Change in ego-defensive attitudes is accomplished in non-threatening environments such as those provided in psychotherapy. A cathartic expression of feelings prevents the arousal of attitude rather than changes it. Psychoanalytic tradition also suggests the possibility of providing an individual with insight into the defense mechanism-source of his attitudes in a non-threatening manner.

The value-expressive function applies to attitudes which express a person's values or enhance his self-identity. Such attitudes are aroused by conditions

that threaten the person's self-concept, or by cues that make the person's values more salient to him.

Change in value-expressive attitudes is induced by dissatisfaction with oneself or change in values.

Katz' (1960) functional theory of attitudes has not stimulated much research except for the work on changing ego-defensive attitudes. However, the functional approach represents an attempt to unify various ideas concerning attitude formation and attitude change suggested by learning, consistency, and psychoanalytic theories.

Functional theory of attitudes, however, simply was not accepted by theorists as a unifying principle of attitude formation for several decades. Recently, it has reappeared and has been seen as helpful to understand some automatic responses in racial attitudes (Pratkanis, Breckler & Greenwald, 1989; Van Dijk, 1987).

Automatic and controlled responses. Automatic processes are unintentional. They are spontaneous responses which have been developed over time. They do not issue from conscious effort. They are initiated by

environmental cues or stimuli (Shiffrin & Dumais, 1981). They are inescapable, and they occur in spite of efforts to ignore them. On the other hand, controlled processes are intentional. They need the attention of the individual. They are more flexible than automatic processes and are useful to make decisions, to solve problems, and to initiate new behaviors.

In their discussion of the persistence of repeated behaviors such as buckling one's seatbelt, Ronis, Yates and Kirscht (1989) explained the task in terms of automatic and controlled processes. Initially, the buckling of one's seatbelt is a controlled process. One's attitude toward buckling the seatbelt is key in the development of the new behavior. As one repeats the response over time, the response becomes an automatic rather than a controlled response.

One outcome of the movement from controlled to automatic processes is that these two processes can operate independently of each other. Divine (1989) indicated that the processes may "dissociate" from each other; she cited several empirical studies which

support the theory of dissociation. The findings indicated that, "when automatic processes would produce a response that would conflict with conscious expectancies, subjects can inhibit the response based on automatic processes and intentionally replace it with one consistent with their expectancies" (p. 187).

The distinction between automatic and controlled processes provides a theoretical understanding of the process required to change prejudiced responses toward stereotyped group members (e.g., African Americans) and toward aspects of the stereotype (e.g., use of Black English).

Divine (1989) likened prejudice to a "bad habit." Automatically activated stereotypes function like a bad habit. Ronis, Yates and Kirscht (1989) indicated that to eliminate a habit requires essentially the same steps as to form a habit: one must elicit controlled responses until those responses become automatic.

In the change process, however, the earlier established attitude or stereotype remains intact even when one forms a new attitude. Although prejudiced persons may have changed their beliefs concerning a

stereotyped group, the stereotype remains in memory. During the process of change, the new pattern of ideas or behaviors must be maintained at the conscious level, or the individual is likely to revert to former automatic patterns of response. As personal belief becomes more accessible, it provides a rival response to the automatic responses.

Prejudicial attitudes and negative stereotypes are formed through a long period of socialization. They do not change easily or without effort. Rather, as Divine (1989) noted, to change racial attitudes is a difficult thing to do. The racial category African Americans and the racial stereotypes are strongly associated; thus, the stereotype and its corresponding negative affect are readily associated. Fazio (1989) indicated that to modify highly accessible attitudes is difficult; Divine (1989) stated, "What is needed is an analysis of the conditions that make individuals want to change their attitudes" (p. 200). The present study was designed to help bring those conditions to light.

Functionalism: stereotypes and personal beliefs.

The later half of the 20th century has yielded

legislation that has made discrimination illegal. Such legislation has led many to question whether shifts in attitudes have accompanied legal changes.

Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) pointed out that nearly two-thirds of the American population lived at the time when to discriminate against African Americans was not only the custom, but was also legal.

A review of the literature by Irvine (1988) on teacher expectations indicated that teachers in general, and especially white teachers, have more negative expectations for African American students than for white students in such variables as personality traits, language, ability, behavior, potential, and physical appearance. In her review, Irvine pointed out two studies by Williams (1970) and Woodward and Salzer (1971) in which language is the expectation measure; teachers were found to expect less of African American children who spoke nonstandard English.

Divine (1989) has synthesized available research concerning the functions of automatic and controlled processes in prejudice. This synthesis helps to



explain prejudicial attitudes as well as shifts in such attitudes.

The survey literature on racial attitudes as summarized by Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) suggests that integration attitudes have become more positive and the belief of African American inferiority has steadily declined. Yet in their review of the literature, Crosby, Bromley and Saxe (1980) suggested that prejudice is still prevalent and is a dominant negative force, and that while whites comply with non-racist ideology, they have not internalized such values. They indicated that whites still discriminate against African Americans in behaviors that lie primarily out of awareness, and that overt expressions of prejudice have been replaced by covert expressions.

The analysis of Crosby and her colleagues is similar to the arguments of many theorists that prejudice is inevitably an outcome of categorization. For example, the tripartite model of attitudes, as presented in Chapter 1, holds that stereotypes are the cognitive (rather than affective or behavioral) component of prejudicial attitudes. Billig (1985)

reviewed the literature to that effect. The theorists argue that as long as stereotypes exist, prejudice logically follows. Ehrlich (1973) argued that ethnic attitudes "are part of the social heritage of the developing child. They are transmitted across generations as a component of the accumulated knowledge of a society" (p. 110).

As Divine (1989) indicated, this pessimistic analysis disregards a distinction between knowledge of stereotypes and endorsement of the stereotypes; although one may have knowledge of a stereotype, he may or may not have personal beliefs congruent with the stereotype. There is no good evidence that knowledge of stereotypes about a group implies prejudice toward the group. Rather, the applied research studies indicate that the opposite is true (Bettleheim & Janowitz, 1964; Brigham, 1972; Karlins, Coffman, & Walters, 1969).

Stereotypes (knowledge) and beliefs (endorsements) do overlap, but they are distinct conceptually (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Billig, 1985). Each of these cognitive structures represents only a portion of our

knowledge of a given object. Contemporary models of the cognitive portion of attitudes, for example, the model given by Pratkanis (1989), recognize that attitudes contain a variety of information about an object. Pratkanis understands "belief" as a proposition that is endorsed and accepted as true, and which therefore is a subset of information a person possesses about an object. Beliefs, the cognitive component of attitudes, may differ from feelings, the affective component. The stereotype and the belief may not be congruent with each other; to the extent that they do not overlap, they represent different subsets of information. The behavioral portion of the attitude is influenced by both stereotypes and personal beliefs which may have different implications for evaluation of and behavior toward members of the racial group.

Divine (1989) explored how stereotypes (knowledge) and personal beliefs (endorsements) relate to the more and less conscious responses to stereotyped groups. This is important to the present study of attitude change since, as Divine (1989) indicated, there exists, "a strong association between the racial category

Blacks and the racial stereotype [e.g. Black English] making the stereotype and its corresponding negative affect highly accessible. . ." (p. 200).

### Conclusions Concerning Attitudes

Researchers and theorists have noted a shift in racial attitudes in a positive direction, accompanied by some prejudiced behaviors (Crobsy, Bromley & Saxe, 1980; Firebaugh & Davis, 1988; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). This is explained by the dissociation of automatic and controlled processes which allows them to operate independently. Some situations allow an individual to respond with controlled processes while others bypass controlled processes and demand automatic processing.

Then too, factors other than the stereotype and personal belief influence personal reactions to stereotyped groups. Fazio (1986) indicated that situations often contain variables other than attitudes which influence behavior. Ajzen (1982) indicated that normative expectations may be one such variable, that is, the social norm of the individual's milieu may be to demonstrate prejudicial or non-prejudicial behavior.

Mann (1960) and others have demonstrated that such norms play a part not only in the development of attitude but also in the process of change. In her review of the literature, Divine (1989) concluded that those studies suggest that attitude change must be functional before it will occur, and that it must serve a utilitarian or social adjustment function for the individual. That occurs when the individual is no longer rewarded (or is punished) for his attitudes, or when the individual experiences a change in needs.

The functions of attitude-change, that is, the motivation underlying the change, can be explored through attribution research which is concerned with the explanations for behaviors offered by individuals and which anchors the behavior in a social context. Chapter 4 of the present study indicates the attributions which individuals have ascribed to their own shifts in attitudes.

#### Questions Raised by Attitude Theories

The many theories of attitude formation and change raise questions for research into attitudes. Certainly not all theories can be verified to be equally forceful

or valid in attitude change. The following questions offered possible perspectives for the present study of attitude change.

1. In the present study, will any of the theories seem to emerge as dominant?
2. Do teachers who change their attitudes become conscious of the change?
3. Do teachers experience inconsistency in their attitudes as noxious?
4. Do teachers change their attitudes to restore a sense of balance?
5. Do teachers strive to make their attitudes toward language congruent with credible sources?
6. Do teachers' overall attitudes toward the use of social dialects agree with their cognitive structural components, that is, with their more general values? How? How not?
7. Have teachers made decisions concerning students' use of social dialects which are dissonant with their attitudes? Have their attitudes changed because of such decisions?

8. Are teachers' attitudes toward the use of social dialects responses to specific stimuli? What are they?
9. Do teachers' perceptions of the purpose of the researcher influence their judgment? Do they construe the Language Attitude Scale as a persuasive message? How do they respond?
10. Is the researcher evaluated as fair? As credible? Is this evaluation tied to an attitude change in a positive direction?
11. Is the researcher or the research tool perceived as conveying a message within or without the individual teacher's latitude of acceptance?
12. Do teachers change attitudes toward social dialects to gain perceived rewards or to minimize perceived punishments?
13. Do teachers change their attitudes toward social dialects to maintain an orderly world-view? Do they see the researcher as a treatment rather than a tool of investigation and respond to what they perceive to be his world-view?

14. Do teachers' attitudes not change because they are ego-defensive in nature? Do teachers' attitudes toward social dialects protect them from unacceptable impulses of prejudice?
15. Do teachers' attitudes toward social dialects enhance their own self-identity as a teacher?
16. Do teachers express motivational patterns for change? Do the conditions required for change form patterns?

#### Attribution Theory

Attribution theory holds that ordinary explanations, sometimes called, "Lay Theories," (Furnham, 1988) represent processes by which people attribute events and experiences to causal factors (Antaki & Brewin, 1982). An attribution is an inference about why an event occurred or about a person's dispositions or psychological states (Weary, Stanley & Harvey, 1989). Attribution research most often considers the types of explanations offered by people about the nature of behavioral outcomes (Furnham, 1988). Theorists and theories of attribution are numerous. What follows are highlights of some of



the concepts of attribution useful to the present study.

Heider (1944, 1958), initiated Attribution Theory. In his work, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (1958), he detailed how people answer questions such as, "What is he really like when you get to know him?" He referred to his analysis as "Common-sense psychology," as it would be phrased in every-day, or, commonsense language. His concern lay with the events that occur for most people in everyday life, and the manner in which people come to understand them and explain them in commonsense terms. His description of the locus (place) and further distinction between internal causal attributions (whatever I attribute to myself) and external causal attributions (whatever I attribute to my environment) sparked further research.

Certainly later research has demonstrated that to internalize success and to externalize failure is a common response pattern. Mary Anne Layden (1982) indicated that the general trend for people is to take credit for success but not to feel equally responsible for failure. She pointed out research which indicates

that even uninvolved observers make stronger internal attributions for an actor's success than for his failure. The tendency to internalize success and to externalize failure has become known in the literature as an attributional bias (Miller & Ross, 1975).

Layden (1982) also researched the question of differences in self-esteem in attributional style. The study indicated that high self-esteem persons made internal attributions in response to success, while they responded to failure with external attributions. Low self-esteem persons, however, were less prone to select internal causes to explain success, but were more likely to select internal causes to explain failure.

Kelley (1972) proposed the principle of discounting. This principle applies to the situation which involves an attributor who has information about a number of possible causes and a given effect. The theory deals with the reasons some causes are discounted and others are accepted as the real cause. If, for example, a writer is paid to produce a journal article on busing, a reader may discount the positive

attitude of the author and attribute his positiveness to his payment.

Kelley (1967) based his analysis of the attribution process on the covariation principle. He theorized that people often make attributions of cause from data which they analyzed as though they were performing an analysis of covariance, ANCOVA. McArthur (1972) reported evidence which supports Kelley's idea. However, a number of studies have found that not all people are able to assess covariation information, and much of the literature to that effect has been reviewed (Alloy & Tabachnik, 1984; Crocker, 1981; Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

Daryl Bem (1965) was first known as a contributor to dissonance theory in attitude-change research. However, his contribution, Self-perception theory (1972), originally intended as an alternative approach to dissonance theory, launched him into attribution theory.

Bem (1972) theorized that people come to know their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states in part by inference from their own behavior and

behavioral contexts. That means that people review and imagine their acts, along with the contexts in which they acted, and then infer their internal states by logical deduction. Weary, Stanley and Harvey (1989) used this example: "If I was [sic] eating scallops, and no one was influencing me to eat them, then I must like scallops" (p.23). The totally unorthodox implication of Bem's analysis is that people do not know what they think, feel or believe before they act. He asserted that people infer their internal states such as attributions and attitudes after they behave and that they cannot remember internal states which are discrepant with their behavior (Weary, Stanley & Harvey, 1989).

A brief summary and comparison of basic attribution theories is provided by Weary, Stanley and Harvey (1989). They point out that Heider's simplistic analysis provided the basis for all further development, and that all subsequent analyses contained some elements of Heider's formulation. Heider did not provide much empirical foundation for his notions, but Jones and Davis (1965) presented the first empirically

grounded attribution statement; they were concerned primarily with person-perception process, and their theory focused exclusively on the attributions for the behaviors, intentions and distributions of others. In contrast, Bem's work was concerned entirely with self-attribution. He theorized about the process through which people come to know their own internal states including attitudes, beliefs, and emotions, and he also provided an empirical foundation for his theory of self-perception processes. Kelley's early work represents an attempt to synthesize and integrate the work on self-attribution process with other-attributional processes.

#### Questions Raised by Attribution Theories

These aspects of attribution theory raised some questions to provide prospective for the researcher.

1. In the present study, will any of the theories seem to be more on target than the others?
2. Do teachers ascribe the locus of attribution for change to be internal (what took place within themselves) or external (what transpired in the environment)?

3. Will internal attributions (more frequent in attributions for success) be used to explain a positive shift in attitude, and will external attributions (more frequent in attributions for failure) be used to explain a negative shift in attitude?
4. If the internal locus is experienced as a threat, will teachers shift their attributions to the external locus?
5. Do teachers discount (Kelley, 1972) valid causes for their own change in attitudes? Do they discount the objective nature of the research because of the school setting?
6. Do teachers' attributions for attitude-changes seem to be based on ANCOVA reasoning? What are the primary effects, the interaction effects, and the covariants?
7. Are teachers aware of their attributions even if they have not acted and reflected (Bem, 1972)? And does the first administration of the Language Attitude Scale provide a behavior which is then followed by nine months for reflection?

These questions and those relating directly to attitude-change theory provided possible perspectives and foreshadowed possible problems for the researcher in the process of interviewing the informants.

### CHAPTER 3

#### RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter describes the sample for the study, the design and instrumentation employed, as well as the strategy followed for qualitative investigation.

#### Sample

The sample for the study was the population of teachers and administrators of the Tidewater elementary parochial schools. The number of schools was eight: Christ the King parish school with 15 teachers; Holy Trinity parish school with 16 teachers; Portsmouth Catholic regional school with 16 teachers; St. Gregory the Great parish school with 23 teachers; St. Mary Academy with 11 teachers; St. Matthew parish school with 15 teachers; St. Pius X parish school with 19 teachers; Star of the Sea parish school with 17 teachers. Each school had one administrator. All eight principals took part in the study. Of the 138 population, 21 were women religious; five were school principals, and 16 were classroom teachers. Of the 117



lay educators, 114 were classroom teachers, and three were principals.

Most of the teachers and administrators in the schools had been certified by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Nearly all those who had not, were certifiable. At times teachers are employed by parochial schools until teaching positions become available to them in public school districts where they receive higher salaries and more benefits. Some teachers who took part in this study moved into public schools as positions became available to them. Yet other teachers (including, but not exclusively, the 21 women religious in this study) will not apply for positions in public schools since they see their work as a ministry within the Church. Some are motivated to teach in parochial schools because they prefer a structure in which pupils move about the school in orderly silent lines, where discipline is firm and pupils are expected to exhibit self-discipline, where rote memory and recall frequently are the educational method of choice, where religion is taught throughout

the school day, and where teachers and pupils pray together.

The schools are urban in nature because they serve an urban population. St. Mary Academy, located in the inner city of Norfolk, serves an all African American student body. Most of the pupils speak Black dialect. Nine of St. Mary's teachers were African American including one African American male, deemed by the faculty to be very important for role identification because of the great number of children who come from fatherless homes. The African American population of the other schools ranges from 9% to 56%. All have pupils whose native language is dialectal English.

All of the schools qualify for Chapter 1 funds because of the number of students from low income families. Because of federal law requiring the separation of Church and State, classes funded by federal grants must be held apart from the Church's school building.

In the past, parochial schools have been subjected to very little research. While a host of attitude studies have involved public school teachers, the

literature is void of studies involving parochial school teachers. There is no body of literature to indicate that attitudinally, parochial school teachers are very like or very different from public school teachers. While this study begins to establish some attitudinal norms for parochial school teachers as a basis for comparison to public school teachers, the primary purpose of the study has been to examine attributions for change in attitude toward speakers of social dialects, and not to compare groups of teachers. In which group of teachers those attitudes reside is of very little consequence to the integrity of the study.

Certainly the study represents the parochial elementary school teaching population of Tidewater, Virginia. The sample encompasses the entire population:  $n=N$ . The other parochial elementary schools throughout the Catholic Diocese of Richmond are similar to those in Tidewater. Those schools are located chiefly in Richmond, Virginia, and Roanoke, Virginia. Nationally, parochial schools are located primarily in urban areas. The student and teaching populations nationally are similar to those of local

parochial schools. The similarities provide a rationale to generalize the study far beyond the area from which the sample has been drawn. Further, Taylor's (1973) national study of teachers' attitudes toward speakers of non-standard dialects indicated wide agreement among geographic areas, while variables other than geography were identified as significant correlates of attitudes.

Whether the study can be said to be representative of teachers in public schools can be argued for all of the reasons stated above. Teachers and students in parochial schools are similar to those in public schools in many ways, but the environments are significantly different. This study should be viewed as valuable in itself and as an important building block for further studies which will encompass teachers in public school districts.

#### Design and Instrumentation

To answer the question as to why some teachers change their attitudes toward speakers of nonstandard English over time requires, as a first step, identification of those teachers who do undergo a

change in attitudes. For that purpose the Language Attitude Scale was administered to the research sample in August, 1991, prior to the opening of the school year.

Prior to responding to the instrument, subjects heard a tape of five American dialects as a demonstration of dialectal English. These were presented in random order as: Southwestern "Chicano" dialect; Southeastern Gullah ("rural") dialect; California "Valley Girl" dialect; New England "French Canadian" dialect; African-American Urban ("Black English") dialect. Taylor designed this portion of the administration of the Language Attitude Scale to help subjects focus on dialect rather than race, and to help reduce possible defensiveness about racial issues. Much more is known about attitudes toward race than toward social dialects, which likely is related.

Thus, new teachers were assessed before they began to teach, and continuing teachers were assessed prior to the beginning of the school year. Teachers were granted a degree of anonymity through the assignment of an identification number. Researchers were reassessed

nine months later in May, 1992, through a second administration of the Language Attitude Scale. Performances on the pretest and posttest were compared for each subject to determine change in attitude during the school year. Not only were each teacher's total scores on the pretest and posttest compared to identify statistical change, but scores on each item were compared to identify functional change as well. No treatment was administered between the pretest and posttest since the purpose of the study was to determine what unplanned events occurred to cause teachers to shift their attitudes.

The Language Attitude Scale is a self-report Likert scale composed of 25 items. Twenty-four items are distributed across three categories. Eight items in category (a) pertain to attitudes toward the structure and usefulness of Nonstandard and Black English; eight items in category (b) relate to attitudes concerning the consequences of using and accepting Nonstandard English in the educational setting; and eight items in category (c) explore philosophies concerning the use and acceptance of

Nonstandard and Black English dialects. A fourth category, attitudes toward cognitive and intellectual abilities of speakers of Nonstandard or Black English is represented by a single item.

In constructing the Language Attitude Scale, Taylor (1973) selected the 25 items from an initial pool of 117 items as a function of their ability to discriminate teachers with positive attitudes toward Black English from those with negative attitudes toward Black English. Judgments of item sensitivity were made following administration of the 117 items to a standardization sample of 186 teachers throughout the United States. Judgments were made on the basis of response patterns on each item. The teachers most in favor of Black English (top 25 percent) were identified as were the teachers most against the use of Black English (bottom 25 percent). Score differences between the two groups were analyzed with a t-test. All of the items selected for the Language Attitude Scale elicited statistically significant response differences at or beyond the .05 confidence level, and were among those items which evoked the highest t-scores within a given

category. T-values were generally robust, ranging from a low of 6.07 to a high of 13.3. Thus construct validity was demonstrated in establishing the facts that (a) the survey contains the right kinds of question, and (b) discriminate validity exists since the items differentiate among degrees of attitudes held.

For the purposes of this study, the degree of internal consistency of the Language Attitude Scale was of paramount importance since this study sought to investigate the instability of attitudes over time, and not the content of the attitudes. Using the responses of the pretest sample (N=138), Cronbach's coefficient alpha was derived to determine internal consistency. The alpha coefficient for all 25 items was 0.941; for the 24 items in the first three content categories, alpha was 0.937. The alpha for the first content category, eight items, was 0.837; the second content category, eight items, showed an alpha coefficient of 0.858; and the third content category, eight items, yielded an alpha of 0.84. Thus interitem consistency was demonstrated to be satisfactory.



While the first phase of this study focused on the change in what teachers think and feel, the second phase focused on the experiences, reasoning, and thought processes underlying the shift in thought and feelings. The research questions, "What happened to cause you to change your attitudes?" or, "To what do you attribute this change in attitude?", cannot be answered through quantitative investigation, but rather through qualitative research methods. In a real sense, the researcher had to become the instrument of investigation and measurement.

The researcher was well suited to conduct qualitative research because of his training and experience in counseling. As a graduate student in the School of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America, he received academic credit for a full year of study of Clinical Pastoral Education at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. There he studied the innuendos of Rogerian Client Centered Therapy (Rogers, 1989) which he put into practice with hospital patients for ten hours each week with follow-up critiques offered by instructors and peers. Of all the

models of psychotherapy, perhaps Client Centered Therapy equips the clinician best to understand the nature of the client's feelings, and the researcher has been grounded in that method. Further, as a Catholic priest, the researcher has counseled successfully numerous clients throughout the last 20 years. The purpose of his counseling has been first to help the client to discover his own feelings and second to demonstrate to the client that he understands the client's feelings by reflecting that he understands them. The fulfillment of this purpose has involved a commitment to the value of the individual; that the life of the individual is sacred, that it has ultimate meaning (Frankl, 1984), and that it is now and will be eternally significant. The researcher is further qualified because his cognate area of study on the doctoral level was speech-language wherein he studied speech and language development, disorders, and diagnosis.

To establish a level of trust between the teachers and the researcher was relatively a simple matter, and happened, as planned, automatically. Teachers in

parochial schools tend to value and trust the priests. Generally they like to have the priests visit their classrooms, address the children, teach a lesson, answer the children's religious questions, and pray with their class. They tend to complain when the priests do not come to their classrooms. They value Catholic education and they value the priest as integral to the Catholic Church. They have learned from their earliest days what they teach the children in their classes: the priest is worthy of your trust; he must die rather than reveal any secret you have confessed to him. You should call him "Father." He is a "good Father" figure.

The research sample had all been informed prior to the pretest that the researcher is a Catholic priest who had been involved in Catholic schools for the last ten years. At the time of the pretest, care was taken to speak supportively to the teachers about parochial schools and about the value of parochial school teachers. A level of trust, not possible in other situations, was automatic in this situation.

With the second administration of the Language Attitude Scale in May, 1992, teachers were identified who changed over time. All changes were analyzed. Those who showed significant gains, that is, those whose scores were at or beyond the mean gain were asked for an interview. Those who showed significant losses, that is, those who showed losses at or beyond the mean loss were asked for an interview.

#### Qualitative Strategy

In-depth interviews were conducted to determine attributions of change or consistency in attitudes. In in-depth interview studies, the researcher conducts clinical interviews directed toward understanding peoples' perspectives on their lives, experiences, and situations as expressed in their own words. Interviews were taped, and Dr. Nicholas Bountress, professor of speech, language and hearing in the Department of Child Study and Special Education at Old Dominion University, whose professional life has been dedicated to the study of the educational implications of social dialects, listened to randomly selected tapes to help to ensure

that interviews were conducted and interpreted properly.

In qualitative research, it is critical that methodology not be allowed to supersede the interpretive, intuitive thought processes of the informants as well as of the researcher. In fact, to establish a predefined methodology or methods pool from which to choose to conduct qualitative investigations is considered poor practice by qualitative theorists as is the development of highly-structured predetermined questions (Smith, 1988).

Unfortunately, the flexibility of approach inherent in qualitative research methodology has, in some cases, been confused with a freewheeling, haphazard attempt to collect data (Rist, 1980). While flexibility in qualitative research is essential to its exploratory, discovery orientation, it cannot be conducted haphazardly and yet produce findings worthy of consideration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The strategy used in qualitative inquiry gives direction to the investigation. A common strategy in

educational research design involves the following steps:

1. Take extensive field notes.
2. Hold taped interviews.
3. Interpret the data in summary fashion, quoting directly.

A common practice is to help insure validity by adding the following steps:

4. Return to the informants with summary statements to insure fit. This involves more feedback from informants and increases accuracy of interpretation.
5. Look for synchronous patterns across summaries of positive change and negative change first, then look for similarities and differences in the groups.
6. Try to blend them into a theory, and check for fit against existing theory.

These six steps were followed in the qualitative portion of this study. The findings are elaborated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4  
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Of the 138 teachers who completed the Language Attitude Scale in August, 1991, (pretest) seventeen were eliminated from the study during the ensuing nine months for normal causes of attrition: moves from the area, child-bearing, and illness. Therefore, the size of the sample for the study was 121. The posttest was administered nine months later, in May, 1992. The results of both sets were compared to search for change in attitudes which might have taken place over time.

Within the past decade, self-report techniques have been called into question in attitude studies. Crosby, Bromley and Saxe (1980) in a review of the literature concerning integration attitudes rule out studies which rely on self-report techniques and concentrate on those which use as measures nonverbal behaviors and nonconsciously motivated responses. They argue that prejudice among whites against African Americans is unconsciously motivated and that expressions of prejudice are often covert. Their

argument is similar to the theorists who claim that prejudice is inevitable. However, as presented in Chapter 2, Divine (1989) maintains that knowledge of a stereotype does not of itself imply endorsement of it. Rather, the applied research indicates that the opposite is true.

The present study employed a self-report technique to identify teachers who changed their attitudes. The primary purpose of the study was not to measure attitude change but to uncover the motivation and internal processes surrounding change. Individuals were given an opportunity to agree or disagree with the scores on the Language Attitude Scale. For that reason and because of Divine's (1989) argument, the self-report technique was acceptable.

#### Quantitative Data Analysis

For all 121 teachers, points lost on the Language Attitude Scale outnumber points gained by a ratio of nearly 5:1, the total points lost being 967 and the total points gained, 200. Further, only 31 teachers of 121, or 26%, showed gains, while 83 teachers, or 69% showed losses. These results are in sharp contrast to



Taylor's (1974) findings, who wrote of being encouraged by the positive nature of the cross-sectional findings. Geography alone does not account for the disparity because in Taylor's national study, the middle Atlantic region was not found to have been a significant variable. In the present study, if only the results of the Language Attitude Scale administered in August, 1991, were compared to Taylor's findings, likenesses would have been uncovered; however, the present study is concerned with change over time. The second administration of the Language Attitude Scale in May, 1992, does not compare favorably with Taylor's cross-sectional findings.

The scores from the two sets of administration of the Language Attitude Scale (August, 1991, and May, 1992,) were subjected to statistical analysis to determine whether the change which took place over time was statistically significant. The statistical method of analysis was a 2 X 4 totally within ANOVA (as within source of variance reflects variability due to uncontrolled factors).

The first variable consisted of two levels: pretest and posttest. The second variable was in three levels, the three major portions of the Language Attitude Scale: (a) the Structure of Nonstandard and Black English; (b) the Consequences of Using and Accepting Nonstandard English; and (c) Philosophies Concerning Use and Acceptance of Nonstandard English. (A fourth category, the Cognitive and Intellectual Abilities of Speakers of Black English, was represented by a single item on the scale; it was analyzed separately.)

The primary effect of the first variable, pretest-posttest, yielded an F ratio of 42.68 which is significant beyond the 0.001 level,  $p = <.001$ ; see Table 1. The standard deviation was 52.3 which reflects the wide variance in individuals' scores.

The primary effect of the second variable, test portions A, B, C, yielded an F ratio of 37.66 which is significant beyond the .001 level,  $p = <.001$ . Thus, a significant difference was found to exist in the scores on the three parts of the Language Attitude Scale. To identify the source of the variance, the data were

subjected to The Newan-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test as a "post hoc." The difference between the performances on sections A and B was found to be significant at the .01 level as were the performances on sections B and C. However, the difference between A and C was found to be statistically nonsignificant. The standard deviation for the second variable, 48.9, reflects the wide variance in scores.

**Table 1**

**Analysis of Variance of the Change in Scores of  
121 Teachers on the Language Attitude Scale**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	Degrees of Freedom	F	Probability
Total	26029.81		719		
S Bet	18328.81		719		
Pre/Post	827.78	827.78	1	42.68	.00
Parts A,B,C	756.47	378.23	2	37.68	.00
V1 x V2	10.38	5.19	2	0.88	.42
ERR 1	2307.88	19.39	119		
ERR 2	2390.53	10.04	238		
ERR 12	1407.97	5.92	238		

The interaction effect between the two variables yielded an F ratio of .88 which represents a statistically nonsignificant interaction. A t-test for

related measures was also used to analyze pretest-posttest differences. The difference in performance on the entire scale,  $t = 6.29$ , was found to be significant beyond the .001 level,  $p = <.001$ . However, the four content categories of the scale, A, B, C, and D, were all significant at the .05 or .10 level. Those that were significant at the .10 level fell just short of being significant at the .05 level. All four categories indicated a general shift, but none of them was outstanding. This helps to explain the non-significant interaction yielded by the ANOVA.

The fourth content category on the Language Attitude Scale, The Cognitive and Intellectual Abilities of Speakers of Black English, was represented by a single item on the scale. The data were analyzed using a  $t$ -test for related measures, and yielded a  $t$ -score of 2.15, which has statistical significance beyond the .05 level,  $p = <.05$ .

Thirty-five teachers constituted a group who had either never taught or had taught for only one or two years. In this group, the total number of points lost outranked the total number of points gained by a ratio

of more than 5:1. Likewise, for the group of new teachers, the range in points lost was greater than the range in points gained. This means that not only were losses more numerous than gains, but they were also more profound; see table 2.

Thirty teachers had from three to five years teaching experience. Proportionately more of these changed their attitudes than did the less-experienced teachers; however, the three to five year group changed them with less intensity. Their range of change-points was from -21 to +9, a range of 30; the younger group had indicated a range in change of -36 to +21, a range of 57 points. The more experienced group was clearly less intense in its changes; yet, like the group with less teaching experience, points lost outnumbered points gained by more than 5 to 1.

There were 29 teachers with six to ten years of teaching experience. This was by far the most positive group: 11 teachers, 38% of this group, showed gains. Points lost outnumbered points gained by a ratio of 3.5:1 as compared to 5:1 for all other groups.

Twenty-seven teachers had taught for ten or more years. This group was remarkably like the group who had taught from three to five years. The oldest group gained a total of 44 points, while 74% showed a mean loss of 10.4; the three to five year group gained a total of 38 points, while 73% showed a mean loss of 10.9.

Taylor (1974, pp. 197-198) had hinted at the possibility of teachers' attitudes cycling over time, a notion he had uncovered in his cross-sectional study of teachers' attitudes in the United States, but he was unable to conclude much concerning the variable of time because his study was based on a single administration of the Language Attitude Scale. In the present study, the group of teachers who had ten or more years teaching experience did perform remarkably like the group of teachers who had from three to five years teaching experience. In fact, if the nonsignificant gains (scores of +1 to +3) as well as the one extreme negative score of -39 (which skews the means and centile scores) were to be eliminated from the older

group, they would have performed virtually the same as the younger group.

**Table 2**

**Data from Change in Performance of 121 Teachers  
on the Language Attitude Scale**

	<u>Group I</u>	<u>Group II</u>	<u>Group III</u>	<u>Group IV</u>
Number of Years Teaching	0-2	3-5	6-10	10+
Number of Teachers	35	30	29	27
Number Showing Gains	8	7	11	5
Number Showing Losses	24	22	17	20
Range of Gains in Points	1-21	2-9	1-17	4-19
Percent Showing Gains	23	23	38	18.5
Percent Showing Losses	69	73	59	74
Range of Losses in Points	1-36	2-21	2-30	1-39

**Table 2** (Continued)

**Data from Change in Performance of 121 Teachers  
on the Language Attitude Scale**

	<u>Group I</u>	<u>Group II</u>	<u>Group III</u>	<u>Group IV</u>
Mean Gain	7.25	5.4	5.5	8.8
Mean Loss	12.6	10.9	12.7	10.4
Range of All Changes in Points	-36/+21	-21/+9	-30/+17	-39/+19
Number Showing No Change	3	1	1	2
Percent Showing No Change	8	3	3	7.5

**Interviews: The Process**

Interviews were clinical in design. They were not restricted to a set of prepared questions, but encompassed whatever the teachers brought to the interview. Two questions always asked of teachers were, "Can you help me to explain the change in your attitude?" and, "To what do you attribute the change?" Often teachers who had become more negative in their attitudes approached the interview with some defensiveness. They were made to understand that they



would not be asked to defend their position.

Sometimes, at the conclusion of interviews, the researcher shared his own educational position on the use of social dialects if he were asked to do so.

While most principals were gracious to offer the use of their office for interviews, the researcher preferred to hold interviews in the teachers' classrooms. He felt that "reporting to the principal's office" might have unfortunate unconscious associations. Sitting for an interview in a teacher's classroom seemed to provide a relaxed atmosphere for the teacher as well as an opportunity for the researcher to observe the classroom and to ask questions. Likewise, it provided a stimulus for teachers to discuss their students and their work which gave the researcher a broader understanding of the individual teacher's educational approach. When issues of academic performance were raised concerning speakers of dialect, teachers could show samples of the students' work to the researcher. Likewise, the researcher often was able to arrive at the classroom a

few moments early, and to observe the teacher informally prior to the interview.

Teachers had not been told at the beginning of the study that those who showed a change in scores would be interviewed. During the interviews, several teachers who showed increased negative scores volunteered that they would not have been honest if they thought that an interview would follow their honesty. While they trusted the researcher, they felt that perhaps their attitudes lacked educational justification.

Interviews varied in length from thirty-five to ninety-five minutes. Most interviews took about an hour. Most interviews were taped, but the tape recorder was not turned on until each teacher gave permission. Seven preferred not to be taped. Some notes were made during the interviews, but extensive notes were made after each interview.

#### Interviews: Qualitative Data Analysis

The Language Attitude Scale, while adequate, is also very sensitive. A shift in a single response changes an individual's score as much as four points. All changes were analyzed. Individuals who showed

gains which could be attributed to more than mere sensitivity of the instrument, that is, those whose gains were at or beyond the mean gain of +6 points, were asked for an interview. Those who showed losses which could be attributed to more than mere sensitivity of the instrument, that is, losses at or beyond the means loss of -11, were asked for an interview. The mean loss and mean gain, rather than the standard deviations, were used as the cut-off, since the amount of variance in scores produced large standard deviations. To use a standard deviation as a cut-off would have eliminated many informants who indicated genuine gains and losses.

Of the 83 teachers showing a loss, 37 showed a loss of 11 to 39 points. Of this group, 33 were willing to be interviewed. Of the four who declined, two were women-religious and two were lay-women.

Of the 31 teachers who showed a gain, 12 showed a gain of six to 21 points. From this group, 11 were willing to be interviewed. The only one who declined was a woman-religious.

Exposure

Twenty of the 33 persons interviewed who showed a loss, that is, over 60% of those who lost points, indicated that their attitudes toward the use of social dialects had definitely declined, and that it had done so because of exposure to the dialect. This group was by far the largest, and by far the most definite in attributions. Likewise, their losses were most profound, averaging 20 points lost per individual.

At the time of the study, this group of teachers were all teaching four or more African American children who spoke Black English and who did not speak Standard English as well. This was the first year for eight of these teachers to teach such children. The other 12 had been teaching African American urban children for two to five years.

In one instance, an entire school of 15 teachers showed losses. Although not all losses were profound, there were no gains, and no one remained unchanged. Teachers explained that in September, the school suddenly became urban; for a number of reasons the enrollment of African American urban children shifted

from 3% to 56%. The exposure to Black English, provided by the shift in enrollment, was extensive.

In this group of 20 teachers, no other single variable influencing teachers' attitudes stood out. Teachers were of both genders who had no teaching experience or who had as much as 26 years teaching experience. They taught all levels, kindergarten through grade 8, and all subject matter, including music and art. The outstanding influence for negative change was exposure to African American children who spoke dialectal English and who did not code-switch to speak Standard English as well.

Some of this group focused on language to explain their reasons for change.

One veteran teacher who previously had taught in inner city public schools of Washington, DC, explained why her attitude suddenly became more negative. She realized in a deeply emotion manner that the ability to communicate verbally is essential. She stated:

I: One of the older girls was nearly raped on the way home from school this year, and I couldn't understand what the children were trying to tell me about it. It was important, and I wanted to understand, but I couldn't understand them.

R: Because of the language.

I: Precisely. Because of the language. I kept saying, "Slow down, slow down," but they were upset, and I just couldn't understand them. Lucky for the girl that a father of one of the children happened to be standing there talking to me, and he did understand them. He was not talking to me in dialect, but he understood the dialect, and he ran out and got the girl. What if he hadn't been there? What would have happened to that poor girl? (pause) Because of the language.

A first year teacher came to associate the use of vulgar language with the use of dialect. She had moved to Norfolk from the Canadian border during the summer.

I: When I moved here, I only had known two Black people, a boy and a girl. We grew up in the same town, and they were the only Blacks in our town. They talked the way you and I talk, and I was a good friend of the girl. When I went to college, I went to a small private college and there were no Blacks there. At least I don't think so. I didn't really notice. And then I moved here! Oh, my God! What a difference! And now I'm trying to teach Black kids who can't stop being vulgar long enough to listen to learn to talk English.

R: Cultural inversion.

I: That's a good term for it. That's exactly what it is, cultural inversion. You want to know what it's like? I'll tell you what it's like with these kids. Did you see the movie, Boys N The Hood? It's an excellent movie, and very accurate. It showed the usage of dialect. It showed that vulgar expressions are punctuation marks in the dialect, and it showed a couple of youngsters who were trying to get out of that situation, and they used less of it.

Some teachers were in a school whose population shifted during the summer. Teachers returned to find that for the first time, the majority of their students were from the inner city. Many of these teachers cited language as the reason for their shift in attitudes.

One teacher stated:

We had a lot of kids from the inner city this year, and they can't understand you, and you can't understand them.

Another teacher indicated:

This is a particularly bad year with the kids. We got a lot of kids from downtown (Norfolk) who just can't communicate.

A third teacher explained her attitude shift:

We've had a number of students come in this year who speak dialect, and I have to ask another child what they said. I can't understand them, even their names I can't understand. What's worse is, they came with good reports and they can't even communicate, and we can't get through to the parents. Part of their not being able to communicate is they don't listen. They don't listen.

Equally important as the exclusive use of dialect is the fact that teachers in the exposure group came to associate negative behaviors and negative attitudes with its use. Teachers verbalized that unfortunate attitudes and behaviors accompany the use of dialectal

English. A portion of an insightful interview with a first-year teacher follows.

I: I'm sure mine (attitude) is considerably different from what it was in August. That's after a year of teaching and my thoughts have changed a lot.

R: What went on?

I: It's the fact that I've been teaching for a year. It's because I got kids in there who I can't understand, and unless you're going to hire bilingual teachers who can speak the Black English and White English, you're not going to survive. The ones who understand almost totally Black English, you cannot understand. Most of them have been in schools where they speak Black English, and then they come here in the middle grades still speaking Black English, and they don't understand even the simplest directions. You have to explain everything every time.

R: Like what?

I: Like find the sums or the differences. You tell them and they still don't learn it. You got to tell them every time. Plus the fact that you get a white child who uses improper English and you correct him, and I try to do the same with Black English, and they don't even understand the fact that they're being corrected. You have to be a bilingual teacher to get across to them, and I'm still not sure you'd get across to some of them.

R: Why is that?

I: It's because it's about much more than their language. It's their whole attitude. They're above correction. My recommendation for these kids having trouble with math is not that they take math for the summer, but that they take an



English course so that they understand. They cannot understand word problems.

If your job as a teacher is to teach them to survive in the world, better forget about Black English because there's only a very small environment that they're going to be able to survive in. They're not going to make it in the business world or anywhere outside the ghetto.

The teacher's perception that, "...it's about much more than language. It's their whole attitude," is a shared perception. A teacher (in another school) said:

I: We've got some African American students in school this year who speak a language and have an attitude.

R: Can you describe the attitude?

I: It's an attitude of distrust, of extreme defensiveness. It's downright disrespectful and rude.

R: How do you handle disrespect and rudeness?

I: I don't any more. I can't. You can't. Nobody can. You can't correct children who don't or won't understand that you don't owe them a living. It's not their language, it's their attitude that keeps them from being able to learn.

One African American teacher who teaches in an all African American inner city parish school was appalled at the behaviors and the attitudes of African American youth in college classes at Norfolk State University. She explained:

I: I'm taking classes at Norfolk State University. The young adults, the students there, are rude and disruptive. Their attitude is that someone owes them something and they're disrespectful to the teachers. Some things they say I would never! I didn't at 18 or 19, and I wouldn't do it now. Just the noise level in a college class; it really disturbs me that a teacher has to say, "come to order, come to order, come to order," and to have an instructor to yell at the class. And to be around them listening to them to the way that they talk -- just in passing-- especially with the females; they're raw. To leave 5th graders and to go with supposedly young adults; it wasn't too much difference other than the age -- they're wild.

R: You say that your 5th graders behave in the same way.

I: Exactly the same, but I come to expect it from 5th graders. I mean you're not surprised when it happens in 5th grade--but in college!

R: Do you think that language is a part of this problem?

I: Yes, it is. It's the rowdy ones who speak dialect and who think someone owes them. (pause)

R: I'm wondering about the educational implications of all this.

I: Well, even in 5th grade, not all of them are willing to learn. You do your best with the ones who want to. I don't know about college, but if it were me, I wouldn't yell at them (pause). I don't know what I'd do.

Another teacher who associates negative attitudes and behaviors with the use of Black English bolstered

her educational position by explaining a personal situation:

My friend and her family are Black. The son has gotten into a lot of trouble this year. The family doesn't speak Black English, but the son does, and he's got a lousy attitude and he's in a lot of trouble this year involving drugs and guns.

One final, perhaps extreme, example of this association of attitudes, behaviors, and language as an attribution for negative change in attitude is from a man whose cohorts describe as "liberal, open minded, a wonderful teacher, and generally a nice guy." He had become a teacher to work with poor urban children. During his fifth year of teaching dialect-speaking African American children, his attitude switched, indicated by a profound loss on the Language Attitude Scale. He explained:

If it were just the language, that would be one thing. But it's not. Anyone who speaks Black dialect--anyone--is also rude, defiant and incorrigible. It goes with the language. I've been trying to teach kids like this for five years now. The only way it will end is to line up all the dialect speakers and shoot them. It's the only way to end it.

That certainly is an unfortunate conclusion drawn from exposure by a man who five years earlier left his

teachers' college filled with hope and methodological procedures to teach inner city children.

Exposure, more than any other single variable, has influenced negative shifts in attitudes. This fact cannot be explained adequately by harkening to the many theories of attitude formation, although the theories may help to explain in cognitive terms some psychological reasons for the shift.

Certainly any of the cognitive consistency theories help to explain the shift. Prior to exposure to Black dialect, teachers held a given set of attitudes toward it which were generally positive, and were in line with their more general values, for example, a respect for cultural and individual differences. In the terms of the theory, their overall affect toward the attitude-object agreed with their cognitive structural component. Exposure to Black English, and to perceived attitudes and behaviors concomitant to the use of Black English, lead to a change either directly in the affective component or in the more general cognitive structural component; that is, teachers either first felt or first concluded

cognitively that students who speak Black English are uneducable. Then, when the inconsistency between the affective and cognitive states reached a level of intolerance, the individuals reduced the inconsistency by changing the as-yet-unchanged component and arriving at cognitive-affective consistency.

In other words, often the attitudes of the exposure group were formulated to maintain cognitive consistency and to provide a standard against which to evaluate aspects of their world. Prior to exposure, they felt genuinely positive toward cultural and individual differences, and saw their educational world as one comprised of a vast array of children who were all different. As one teacher stated, "I like to incorporate their differences into learning about one another." The latitude of acceptance for cultural differences was very wide. But those attitudes proved inadequate to deal with children who were experienced as incapable of communication, rude, defiant, disrespectful, or uneducable. Discrepant, new information created ambiguity which resulted in an adjustment of attitudes and a new world-view which

values homogeneity more highly than individual or cultural differences.

In cognitive dissonance theory, first one would have had to conclude that speakers of Black dialect are uneducable, and then adjust attitudes to agree with that decision.

The shifts in attitude which took place (because of exposure) reside in individuals and therefore are individual in nature. In all instances, the cause of the shift was exposure, but individuals responded to the exposure uniquely.

In the absence of in-depth psychoanalytic investigation, functional theories of attitude formation acknowledge that individuals hold and change attitudes for different reasons. Likewise, functionalism takes account of psychoanalytic theory along with other theories of attitude formation. Yet exposure remains a catalyst for negative change without regard to functional differences.

To make possible the exploration of functions of changing attitudes with individuals, those individuals must have, minimally an awareness of their changing

feelings and a capacity and willingness to explore them. Nine of the 20 teachers in the exposure-group either did not recognize that their attitudes had changed, or did not recognize that they had changed to the extent indicated on the Language Attitude Scale. Upon reflection, they did recognize the changes. Given that level of awareness, a single interview, no matter how detailed, is not likely to probe the significant individual functional variables. The changing functions of attitudes in individuals is the subject of further research, but that is not to say that some conclusions cannot be drawn.

For the exposure group, the increased negativity in attitudes seemed to serve the knowledge function as described by Katz (1989) and discussed previously in Chapter 2. This function is based on the individual's need to maintain an organized, stable, and meaningful world-view. Attitudes which either are formed or changed to maintain cognitive consistency are relevant to the knowledge function; likewise, attitudes and beliefs which are acquired simply for the information value of the individual are relevant. Also serving the

knowledge function are any attitudes or opinions which provide a Standard against which the individual evaluates his world. Stereotypes may serve as the basis for such attitudes.

Attitudes which serve the knowledge function are aroused by cues associated with the problem which the attitude originally solved or by recurrence of the original problem. If new situations present new discrepant information, or if change in environment creates ambiguity, or if more meaningful information has been obtained, then attitudes are changed.

In all instances, knowledge of the stereotype was in place long before formulation of the corresponding world-view; exposure was the variable which led to reevaluation and reformulation of the world-view. As presented in Chapter 2, knowledge of the stereotype does not imply an endorsement of it. When one endorses the stereotype, it becomes a belief, that is, a cognitive component of an attitude, and is then a subset of information an individual possesses about an object. In the exposure-group, the stereotype, "incapable of communication, rude, defiant,



disrespectful, and therefore uneducable, African American" received endorsement and became part of these educators' world-view, thereby maintaining agreement between the affect and structural component, and providing a new standard against which to measure their students.

The exposure group differs from all other groups in that the issues of student's attitudes, behaviors, and ability to communicate are tangible, "in the classroom" issues. All other attribtuions for a shift in attitude were more philosophical in nature; they were less tangible and more abstract.

#### Internal Locus of Attributions

Five teachers made internal attributions for change. Of these five, two explained a positive change, and the other three were to explain negative changes.

One of those who showed a positive change attributed the change to the fact that she is, "open-minded and liberal," and that she continues to "strive to grow in all areas." She also indicated that she interprets the purpose of education as a help to us to

become open-minded, and that the bases for all of her opinions concerning language are: (a) two courses on linguistics which she had in college, and (b) the Public Television Broadcasting Service's presentation, The Story of English. Her husband is from a foreign culture.

The other teacher who both showed a positive change and attributed it to the internal locus stated that, "I am a very open-minded person because of the experiences of life." She elaborated those experiences: As a child she lived on the island of Trinidad and spoke pigeon English; her father spoke dialects of Tagalog; her husband is from the South and speaks a rural dialect.

The researcher sensed from the tone quality of her voice and from her discussion of her many losses (deaths of loved ones) and from her tears, that she appeared to be fighting depression. She seemed comfortable with ego-defensiveness, especially the mechanism of denial. At times she seemed to respond to "the experiences of life" with compensation, responding verbally more positively than she seemed to feel. Her

positive gain on the Language Attitude Scale seemed to fit this pattern.

Most teachers tended to view their negative shifts in attitude as a failure. Personal "failures" are not usually attributed to the internal locus. Yet, three teachers did attribute their negative changes to internal causes. Two of these changed their appointments with the interviewer several times, and one of them could not keep her first appointment even though she had changed the time for her convenience. The interviewer presumed that these two teachers were withdrawing from the interviews. He assumed that they understood that the process would be painful for them, and he assured them that it need not be a difficult process. New appointments were established for interviews. These teachers approached the interview as if it were a counseling situation; they spoke as if they were accustomed to be directed toward introspection.

When asked to what they attribute their change in scores, one answered,

At the time of the second one (posttest), I was more focused on myself and more confident in my

own beliefs. The second one really reflects what I felt all along, but I wasn't confident enough to say so last August.

She attributed the shift in confidence to,  
"personal reasons." She also stated that,

Since last August, my son has begun to have some Black friends, and I'm fearful and worried because he picks up this stuff from the outside.

The interviewer noted that she seemed uncomfortable with the racial overtones of the topic and that she had lived most of her life in Mobile and Selma, Alabama, and in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

The second to attribute a negative change to the internal locus explained that during the summer, prior to the first administration of the Language Attitude Scale,

I had been through serious turmoil with my teenage son. I was emotionally drained and I was worried if I could handle this year. In August I was not into the healing process yet. We were just starting school and I was scared. We walked through the fire. It was very painful. My boundaries at that time had been exploded. It's amazing how our boundaries stretch.

She indicated that she tried to accept dialectal English at the time because she tried so diligently to accept her son's unacceptable behaviors. To accept his behaviors meant that she had to put herself into an

"acceptance mode" and try to accept all unacceptable behaviors. It did not work. Several months later, she rejected her son's behaviors and everything else she had been working to accept.

The third to attribute negative changes to the internal locus was a charming loquacious individual with a vast educational background. She had taught illiterate adults, college level courses and pre-school through grade 12 in public and parochial schools. She attributed her negative change to the fact that, "I have become more conservative in general, and I have had a change in my expectations of children based on this movement toward the right."

The interviewer concluded from these informants that the three who had internal attributions for negative changes experienced those changes as failures, as the work of Layden, cited in Chapter 2, suggests. Those who had internal attributions for positive changes seemed to see their changes as personal successes.

External Locus of Attributions

All other attributions were of the external locus and were philosophical in nature. Apart from the exposure group, all others can be grouped as: (a) educational reasons, (b) good first year teaching experience, (c) social phenomenon, (d) the Language Attitude Scale as a treatment variable, (e) effects of highly emotional issues, and (f) time of year. One other category evolved during the interviews which is more clearly defined through functional theory of attitude change and is one in which several informants defined themselves as being dependent personalities and having exaggerated needs for dependence. This group is discussed later as the "dependent group."

Educational Reasons

Seven teachers listed educational reasons for a change in score on the second administration of the Language Attitude Scale. Significantly, none of the teachers in this group had ever taught children who speak Black English. Several have taught African American children who speak Standard English.

Educational reasons focused either on education of the students or on teacher-education.

Of the three teachers who listed reasons of student-education as the basis for their attributions, only one, a first year teacher, did so to explain a positive change. She stated:

I've worked for a year with children and I see how many differences there are in other ways as well as in language, and I enjoy their differences and I feel positively about them. I like to incorporate their differences into learning about one another.

Two other attributions dealing with children's education were offered to explain negative shifts in attitude. One was from a second year teacher who instructs children in kindergarten through grade 8 in word processing skills. He stated:

Last year I worked entirely with how to turn the computer on and how to use the keyboard. This year I worked entirely with English and mostly with creative writing, getting them to empty their minds on to the monitor. I dealt with what they write and how they write it, and I saw a correlation between the proper use of English and success at learning language skills.

One other listed "performance" as her reason for a negative shift. By "performance" she meant how the

students score on Standardized measures of achievement.

She summarized,

I recognized that I started to change my attitude just last month when it came time for the Spring tests. Performance on those tests depends on English, and the administration insists on high performance scores.

Continuing education was the basis for change for four others. These four all attributed a positive change in attitude to continuing education. One teacher participated in a course on the teaching of reading, and the subject of Black English was presented in the course. She showed a significant shift in a positive direction. However, with one year teaching experience, she has never taught children who speak a social dialect.

Two teachers took courses in psychology to which they attributed their positive change in attitude. One stated that, "My psych courses this year have raised my approval of others." Another explained that, "My course work since January in Early Childhood has spent time on this issue." Both in this group are second year teachers with no exposure to children who spoke non-Standard English.



The last teacher who cited education as her reason for negative change explained that,

I have begun a Master's program in French this year, and I see how demanding the professors are of me so that I can learn French, and I realize how demanding I must be of my students so they can learn English. I'm not allowed any mistakes in French, and I no longer allow any mistakes in English, spoken or written.

#### Good First Year

Three first year teachers, who showed increases of 11 to 17 points in their scores, attributed the gains to a "good" first year experience. One teacher was an African American who taught kindergarten in an inner-city parish school. The other two taught one or two African American children who speak Standard English. All three teachers said that their students were outstanding, and that they had wonderful relationships with helpful parents, other teachers, and the principals.

#### Social Phenomenon

Two teachers from the group of six to ten years teaching experience cited the Los Angeles riots and the Rodney King trial as an attribution for positive change. One teacher stated,

The riots in Los Angeles brought back old feelings of empathy for the causes of the oppressed. Those poor people are treated badly.

The other said,

The riots in Los Angeles sensitized me to others' viewpoints.

They have had no exposure to children who speak a social dialect.

Language Attitude Scale as Treatment Variable

Three individuals cited the first administration of the Language Attitude Scale (the pretest) as the treatment for negative change. All three seemed particularly defensive, and shallow in their replies. They seemed to intellectualize throughout the interviews, and they seemed eager to leave the interviews. The tendency to externalize a sense of failure seemed operative. They stated:

1. The first administration triggered my thinking about it.
2. The first one (pretest) served as a stimulus for me to reevaluate my position.
3. The first time (pretest) was a trigger for further thought.

All three had significant negative shifts. They taught in three different schools. The only African American children they taught spoke Standard English.

Effects of Highly Emotional Issues

Three teachers reported a negative shift in attitude owing to emotionally-charged personal events.

One was on Jury Duty during the school year and could not understand the witnesses. She felt as if the defendant were jeopardized by her lack of capacity as a juror to understand the witnesses who spoke Black dialect.

Another was a mother of six whose youngest son, a teenager, had begun to have African American friends who spoke dialectal English and who was "exposed to all kinds of stuff."

The third was a principal of an inner-city parish school who described what was for her an emotionally-charged event:

I: We had a woman come for our accreditation, and I wanted the staff to look good, and so, -- A Speech/Language teacher had been talking to me about a program called, "Good Oral Speech Schoolwide." The staff does it and the students do it. They partner off with somebody. So, you and I are partners, and I say, "We be doin' dis," and you say, "Try it this way." So, the staff

agreed to do that. They want to sound as good as they are. I was unable to do it with my partner (office help); for a year now we talked about what we should do about a student's lunch, about collecting a tuition, about a student. This office is very hectic, and it's more important that we get a job done and we do it well than that she speak Standard English. Besides, she relates to the folks better than I do."

R: You were uncomfortable correcting your friend.

I: Yes, that's the whole thing. I just couldn't do it. I tried it once and it's like it hurt us both.

She was very moved at this point, reliving the painful memory.

#### Time of Year

Three teachers cited the time of year as their attribution for negative change. None of these teachers teaches children who speak a social dialect.

One woman-religious stated that in August, she was in a "non-school mode," but in May, she was in a "school mode." She felt that on the pretest the summer rest from school had caused her to relax about school-related issues.

The other teachers said that in the summer they were not "tuned into" school yet, or simply had not

begun yet to approach school-related issues evaluatively.

The Dependent Group

Three teachers described themselves as emotionally dependent on their students. This dependence seemed to elevate their scores.

All three described their relationships with their students as their primary relationships. One teacher stated,

I can't imagine doing anything else except teaching. My relationships with the children are very fulfilling. I'm like the mother of the students who are the worst behaved. I don't try to avoid them. I try to be with them. I worry about them when I'm not with them.

Another, a man, summarized,

I find fulfillment in my relationships with my students. They are extremely gratifying, more so than my adult relationships.

A third, a new teacher who has begun to work on a degree in child psychology also describes her dependence on her students.

They fill me up with good feelings. When my relationships with the kids are smooth, everything else in my life falls in line.

These three indicated the greatest increases in scores. Two are first year teachers, and one has

taught for six years. None of them has ever taught children who spoke a social dialect. All have taught African American children who spoke Standard English.

### Summary

Of all teachers who showed a significant change in attitudes, over 45% of them changed because of exposure to children who spoke Black dialect, and their changes reflected a significant increase in negativity. These teachers represent nearly 61% of all teachers who showed losses.

Forty-four interviews were held, 33 with those who became more negative. Of the group of 33 who showed increased negativity, 20 had four or more African Americans who spoke exclusively nonstandard English in their classes. These teachers showed marked increases in negativity, and cited exposure to the dialect as their primary attribution for change. Further, this group of teachers came to associate negative attitudes and behaviors with the use of nonstandard English.

The teachers who listed "exposure" as the key reason for their more negative attitudes did not seem to be more prejudiced than the other teachers. As

discussed in Chapter 2, knowledge of a stereotype does not automatically produce prejudice. Only when the stereotype is endorsed does judgement become prejudicial. Exposure not to African American youth, nor to the dialect alone, but to the dialect along with negative attitudes and behaviors associated with the use of dialect, produced endorsement of the stereotype. Teachers who taught African American youth who spoke Standard English did not endorse negative stereotypes.

Only 9% of those who changed cited educational reasons for a positive change, while 7% of those who changed cited educational reasons for their negative change. That means that only 16% of all changes were attributed directly to educational reasons, half to explain a negative change, and half to explain a positive change.

Nearly 7% of all teachers cited their good experiences as first year teachers as crucial in the development of their positive attitudes, and nearly 5% of teachers indicated positive development of attitudes because the 1992 riots in Los Angeles served to sensitize them to the needs of oppressed people.

Another 7% responded with more positive attitudes as their personal needs seemed to be fulfilled by the children.

Negative shift in attitudes was reported by nearly 7% of the teachers in each of these categories: (a) those who experienced the pretest as a treatment, (b) those who experienced intense emotional circumstances surrounding some issue related to the use of Black English, and (c) those who experienced the time of year for the pretest and the posttest as a key variable.

Eleven interviews were held with those who became more positive. Only one of the teachers who gained points had children with social dialects in her class at the time of the study. She was an African American first year teacher in an inner city parish school who had a "terrific first year," characterized by a supportive principal and helpful parents.

Of all those who became more positive, six were new teachers, and five had up to six years teaching experience. The experienced teachers previously had taught children who spoke social dialects. All of the teachers taught African American children who spoke



Standard English. All of them were exposed to African American youth who spoke Standard English as well as to Filipino and Spanish speaking children, all of whom spoke Standard English.

Further, compared to the attributions for negative change, the attributions for positive change seemed philosophical and pale: the riots in Los Angeles, good first year, personal fulfillment, and continuing education. Nearly as many who saw continuing education as a positive motivator saw it as a negative one! These attributions simply do not have the impact, and were not offered with the same decisiveness to explain such profound changes as the twenty teachers who cited exposure to explain their negative shifts.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a summary of research findings, a reflection on the questions originally raised to help guide the interview process, and recommendations for the development of policy.

#### Summary

The comparatively poor academic performance of African American youth was documented in the first Chapter of this study. Educational gains of African American students are faltering at every level of school. African American youths score significantly lower than other minorities and whites on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and the dropout rate for African Americans is high. Over the years, defective language has been cited often as causal of academic failure.

Nonetheless, for more than 20 years, socio-linguists have been demonstrating that Black English is a valid language. It is logical, rule-governed and consistent in syntax, morphology, phonology, and

lexicon. Hundreds of studies attest to that fact, and William Labov and J. L. Dillard testified to it at the procedures which led to the Ann Arbor Decision. At Ann Arbor, the District Court ordered that teachers be given a program to help them become more sensitive to Black English when teaching Standard English to African American children. The program ended in failure.

Language is readily observable, and Black English is immediately recognized as a problem. Teachers stereotype children based on their language. African American students who speak Standard English are perceived to be more middle class and to have greater ability than African American students who speak Black English. Teachers tend to rate children who speak Black English as less confident and less eager than those who speak Standard English. Likewise, they perceive their Black English speaking student as less intelligent and less apt to perform academically than Standard English speaking students. In oral reading, they tend to reject miscues related to the dialect. In short, African American students must conform their

language to the standard form if they are to be successful.

Expectation studies, notably, Pygmalion in 1968, and refinements thereof for the past 25 years, have revealed that teachers are significant to their students; that they affect their students' self-concepts and achievement, and that their effect on students could be very great.

Often, the culture-language, the values, the home environment, and the mode of learning of African American children are all in contrast to that of white society, white schools, white teachers, and white children. The two societies are culturally dissynchronized: the one has African roots, and the other has European roots. Theorists propose that misunderstandings occur owing to the dissynchronization which in turn lead to conflict, distrust, hostility and school failure. Teachers often avoid reference to race, and feign color-blindness which increases cultural dissynchronization.

The fact of African American academic failure and the studies which document teachers' negative attitudes

toward the use of Black English; the socio-linguistic studies which validate Black English as a social dialect; the fact the attitudes do not alter with ease; the failure at Ann Arbor; the absolute void of written policies for school systems to educate children who speak Black English, all lead to the research questions for this study. They were: (a) Do culturo-linguistic attitudes of urban elementary parochial school teachers change over time? (b) What are the attributions or internal processes that account for changes in attitudes toward the use of dialectal English?

This study has attempted to discover the events to which teachers attribute changes in their culturo-linguistic attitudes. If the causal conditions for change could be uncovered, perhaps those conditions could be incorporated into programs designed for change.

Studies of teachers' attitudes traditionally have been static, involving a single evaluation. Those that have attempted to account for the variable of time have done so through cross-sectional studies. The current study was longitudinal, tracing teachers' attitudes for

the course of a school year. It identified those teachers who, during the school year, changed their culturo-linguistic attitudes. Then an attempt was made to identify the events to which teachers attributed their changes in attitudes.

At first sight, the negative quality of the research findings seemed discouraging. In the course of a year, more than two-thirds of the sample became more negative, and points lost on the Language Attitude Scale outnumbered points gained by a ratio of 5:1.

Most attributions were of the external locus. They involved: (a) educational reasons, (b) good experiences in the first year of teaching, (c) social phenomena, notably the riots in Los Angeles following the release of the defendants in the Rodney King case, (d) the Language Attitude Scale as a treatment variable, (e) the effects of emotional issues related to the use of Black English, (f) the times of year the pretest and posttest were administered, (g) exaggerated needs for dependence filled by the students, and (h) exposure to students who spoke Black English.

The most compelling attribution which teachers offered to explain losses was exposure to African American children who spoke Black English and who did not code-switch to speak Standard English as well. Those teachers came to associate negative attitudes and negative behaviors with their students' use of nonstandard English. This group of teachers represent the vast majority of teachers in the sample who taught dialect-speaking children.

Cognitive consistency theories help to explain in cognitive terms the negative shift in attitudes attributed to exposure. All teachers had knowledge of the stereotype long before they endorsed it. Exposure to Black English and to perceived attitudes and behaviors associated with the use of Black English led to a change either in the affective component of the attitude or in the more generalized cognitive structural component. That is, teachers either felt that the stereotype is valid, or concluded cognitively that it was valid. When the dissonant levels of the affective portion and the cognitive portion became intolerable, the individual reduced the dissonance by

altering the as-yet-unaltered portion, and arriving at consistency once again.

In a statistical study, a correlation could be noted between students' behaviors (use of nonstandard English) and teachers' judgments (students are unfit), but there could be no indication as to cause and effect. In the current study, qualitative interviews have indicated that while teachers were aware of the stereotype, they did not endorse it until they evaluated their students as stereotypical. Only then did their judgments become critical and prejudicial.

### Reflection

In Chapter 2 of this study, a number of questions were formulated from the attitude-change theories to provide perspectives for the research in the interviews and to foreshadow possible problems.

Questions numbered 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 16 dealt with cognitive dissonance theory. The change over time in the present study was explained most aptly through the principles of cognitive dissonance as elaborated in Chapter 4 and again in this Chapter. While the knowledge function of attitudes was served by cognitive



consistency as described in Chapter 4, the individual functional variables are the object of further research.

Question number 2 dealt with awareness of change in attitude. Not all teachers were aware that their attitude had changed, but upon reflection agreed that a change had taken place. As to congruency between attitudes and credible sources (question number 5), those teachers who cited their continuing education as their motivator for change were seeking an alignment of attitudes with credible sources.

Learning theory (questions number 8 and 12) in the classical sense of stimulus and response bonds did not seem to describe the change process. Some teachers did cite the pretest as their attribution for change, but they construed it as a stimulus for reflection and not as a stimulus resulting in response bonds (question number 9).

Teachers seemed genuinely interested in the research and referred to it as "fascinating," "very interesting," and "needed." This seemed to be so for those who changed positively and negatively. Teachers

did not seem to judge the researcher to be the source of their change (question number 10); however, some who showed increased negativity did seem to be apologetic for their attitude shift. This phenomenon appeared to happen because of feelings of moral guilt rather than because of contradiction to the researcher's expectations (question number 13). The research tool was perceived as conveying a message outside the latitude of acceptance (question number 11) by only two teachers with very negative attitudes who did not change their attitudes over time.

No possibility existed for the researcher to pursue the ego-defensive function of attitude-change with teachers (question number 14). Exploration of often unconscious mechanisms such as denial or displacement was not possible.

Teachers who maintained positive attitudes over time seemed to be pleased with themselves as persons and as teachers (question number 15).

Seven questions were also formulated from attribution theories. The questions provided the researcher with a perspective in the interviews.

The research on locus of attribution was helpful (question number 1). Most of the informants ascribed their change in attitude to the external locus (question number 2). Of the five teachers who ascribed a change to the internal locus, those who showed a positive change did seem to experience "success," while those who showed a negative change seemed to experience "failure" (questions number 2 and 3). There was no conscious shifting of locus reflected in the interviews (question number 4).

Teachers were definite in their responses and did not discount; nor did they seem to speak as if they were performing an ANCOVA (questions number 5 and 6).

The informants who were not aware of their attitude change (nearly half of the exposure group) upon reflection became aware of the change. These had to take time to reflect further to identify attributions for change (question number 7). Three informants realized that they experienced the pretest as a treatment variable (question number 7).

Recommendations for Policy Development

Given the fact that increased negativity in parochial school teachers' attitudes toward students who speak a social dialect resulted from mere exposure to such children; given the fact that teachers' attitudes likely affect their behaviors toward their students, their interactions with them, and their expectations for their academic success, the next logical question is one of policy implications.

The first implication is this: teachers must be made aware of the problems. They need to be helped to understand the development of their attitudes as well as the effect that their attitudes have on their behaviors and interactions with their students. Toward that end, policies for staff-development might include in-service programs with sufficient follow-up, reinforcement, and reflection to ensure their success. Further, the lesson learned from the failure at Ann Arbor should be put into practice: the in-service must be evaluated and adjusted.

Boards of Education and superintendents of parochial schools need to develop effective programs to

introduce new teachers slowly to the problems associated with youth who speak dialectal English, and not to assume that the colleges have prepared them fully for the challenge. Teachers' colleges and universities could begin to provide guided exposure to African American students who do not code-switch and who may be experiencing cultural dissynchronization. The long lived common practice to train future teachers by placement in schools with "master teachers" should be evaluated; student-teachers may learn a set of unfortunate attitudes from master teachers who have come, merely through exposure, to endorse negative stereotypes. Twenty years ago, Fasold and Shuy (1970) called for the development of the position of "Urban Language Specialist" in the schools. Such a professional could assist new teachers in their adjustment to culturally dyssynchronized situations and thus possibly to intercept the development of negative attitudes. Further, the Urban Language Specialist could help to provide in-service education for continuing teachers and assist them to appreciate the logical development of negative attitudes and their

deleterious effect on the students. Finally, such a specialist would assist in the development of curricula appropriate to speakers of social dialects.

Further study is needed. Specifically, the changing functions of attitudes in individuals is the subject of further research. As cited in Chapter 4, the shifts in attitude which took place because of exposure reside in individuals and therefore are individual in nature. The cause of the shift was exposure; individuals responded to the exposure uniquely but with the same result, endorsement of the stereotype. Cognitive consistency theories, and theories concerning the knowledge function of attitudes, explain the shift in broad theoretical terms. What is needed is in-depth case studies of individuals who changed their attitudes because of exposure. In case studies, individual functional variables could be explored more fully. Such in-depth investigation might include psychoanalytic input as well as year-long investigations and observations on the change-process and reflections on it. When a sufficient number of case studies has been assembled,

new theories may emerge. But for the present, school systems should develop written policies based on the available information.

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## Autobiographical Statement

Charles Saglio was born in New Britain, Connecticut, in 1942. He attended St. Thomas Seminary High School and Junior College in Bloomfield, Connecticut, and received a B.A. in Medieval Philosophy from St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1964. He received an M.S. in Education from Central Connecticut State College in 1968, and received Connecticut State Certification as a reading consultant. He received instruction in early childhood developmental examining through the Gesell Institute of Child Development in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1968. He taught in the elementary schools of Ridgefield, Connecticut, and served that school district as a reading consultant. In 1974 Charles received the S.T.B. degree in Theological Studies from the Catholic University of America and was ordained to the Roman Catholic Priesthood. Since then he has served the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Virginia, in active ministry in parishes and parish schools. He received the Ph.D. in Urban Education from Old Dominion University in 1993.